Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الرأي»

Volume 17 Number 5362 | AMMAN WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 1993 SAFR 1,1414 | Price: 150 Fils

Nomination opens for Yemeni council

SANAA (R) — Yemen's newly-elected parliament opened the door Tuesday for deputies to nominate candidates for the country's five-member presidential council. Candidates must be at least 35 years old, born to Yemeni parents, not married to a foreigner, not implicated in political or criminal cases and must enjoy the support of a quarter of the 301-member parliament. A date for a secret ballot to elect the new council has not been set yet but the parliament, formed after united Yemen's first general elections in April, said nominations have to be presented by Aug. 20. The current council, formed in May 1990 when North and South Yemen merged includes President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who headed the conservative north, and Vice-President Ali Salem Al Baidh, who was leader of South Yemen. The other three members are Abdul Kareem Al Arshi, who was head of the North's Shura (consultative) council, Salem Saleh Mohammad, a senior official from South Yemen, and former South Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani. President Saleh's General People's Congress emerged as the largest party in April's elections followed by the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), which held power in South Yemen. The Islamist Islah Party holds about a quarter of the seats in parliament.

Christopher expected in Cairo July 31

CAIRO (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will visit Cairo on July 31 during a Middle East tour to push forward the peace process, Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Tuesday. The United States has been trying to end the stalemate between the Arab and Israeli negotiators. Egypt has been helping the U.S. mediation. Mr. Christopher sent his envoy Dennis Ross to the region earlier this month and announced he would visit himself after receiving Mr. Ross's report. From Egypt, Mr. Christopher will go to Israel, Jordan, and Syria. His Middle East mission will follow a visit to Singapore and Australia. Israel Radio said Mr. Ross will tour the Middle East from July 28 to prepare Mr. Christopher's visit. Mr. Ross, the State Department's coordinator for the Middle East peace process, would spend July 28 in Israel before moving on to Jordan, Syria and Egypt, the radio said. He shuttled round the region for a week from July 8 trying to unblock the peace negotiations, a task which now awaits Mr. Christopher.

Arafat says confederation is Jordanian-Palestinian goal

Combined agency dispatches

TUNIS — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has publicly called for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation after the establishment of a Palestinian state in an address to students on the occupied West Bank.

"Confederation is the free and voluntary choice of the Palestine National Council (PNC)," Mr. Arafat said in his first public endorsement of the idea he discussed with His Majesty King Hussein earlier this month.

Mr. Arafat was speaking Monday to students celebrating the victory of a list backing his Fateh mainstream wing in student elections at Al Najah University in Nablus. The list last week defeated Muslim fundamentalist rivals.

Palestinians say the confederation idea is meant to break a deadlock in negotiations on Palestinian self-rule in the Israeli-occupied territories.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is due to visit the Middle East in early August to try to breathe new life into the stalled talks.

Mr. Arafat, who has been speaking by phone to Palestinian gatherings in the occupied territories, also urged his followers in the Fateh movement — the largest faction in the PLO — to maintain good relations with rivals in the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement.

The aim of Palestinians is "the establishment of an independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital, to become later part of a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation, in accordance with the free wishes of our two brotherly people," the agency quoted Mr. Arafat.

"There is nobody among us (Palestinians) who would give up one inch of national territory, and (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin and the Americans who are behind him would do well to understand this," he said.

"The enemy must understand that we want a just peace and not a capitulation," Mr. Arafat said.

The PNC adopted the idea of a confederation as official policy in 1983, and has reaffirmed its support for it.

The idea was refloated last week by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who said Thursday that Israel should embark on talks with the Palestinians on the subject.

There was nothing in the remarks to indicate that Mr. Arafat would ever abandon the idea of a sovereign Palestinian state. But describing such a state in terms of a bridge to a confederation with Jordan could be a step towards agreement with Israel.

Palestinian and Israeli officials have been reported as saying that the idea of a confederation was likely to be raised when Mr. Christopher arrives in August in a fresh bid to revive the peace talks. The 10th round of talks — involving Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel — ended inconclusively on July 1 in Washington.

PLO officials said the confederation idea had wide support in the powerful 100-man Fateh Revolutionary Council, meeting in Tunis.

The council, headed by Mr. Arafat, was expected to end its meeting in Tunis late Tuesday with a statement on the subject.

Al Chourouk, a Tunisian newspaper well-connected to the Palestinians, reported Tuesday that PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas would resume talks soon with Jordanian officials in Amman on the proposed confederation.

The paper said the two sides were involved in serious consultations on the final details of confederation. the paper said Jordan had apparently put forward an old idea to establish a united Arab kingdom, including Jordan and any Palestinian areas surrendered by Israel.

The Palestinians prefer a confederation between two independent states, the paper said.

King Hussein has said in recent months that a confederation is not feasible unless Palestinians can freely choose it after they gain sovereignty in the lands where they live. Jordan dropped all claims to the West Bank in July 1988, declaring it the responsibility of the PLO, regarded by most Arabs as the sole representative of Palestinians.

After meeting with King Hussein in June, Mr. Arafat told reporters that relations between Palestinians and Jordan were "a good example of a confederation relationship that was voluntarily chosen by the two brotherly people." But he declined to say whether he and the King had discussed confederation.

'Indirect talks'

Israel is using a foreign intermediary to try to unblock the peace talks with the Palestinians, the Hadashot newspaper reported Tuesday.

Prime Minister Rabin told Interior Minister Aryeh Deri about the clandestine contacts Monday, the Hebrew daily said, quoting high-level political sources.

Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari said there was no truth in the report, which follows a series of revelations in the Israeli press about secret negotiations with the PLO.

Hadashot said Mr. Rabin has informed the PLO he was prepared to withdraw the Israeli army from part of the occupied Gaza Strip if the Palestinians agreed not to raise the question of the status of Jerusalem at this stage of the peace talks.

Foreign Minister Peres told parliament Monday that no Israeli leader had met PLO officials.

ANOTHER VICTIM: A wounded Bosnian woman waves goodbye as she is evacuated by the U.N. with other wounded from Sarajevo's Kosevo Hospital Tuesday to a hospital in Germany for further medical treatment (see Bosnia story on page 8) AFP photo

Cetin to visit Jordan and Israel

AMMAN (R) — Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmat Cetin will visit Jordan and Israel later this month for talks on the Middle East peace process and bilateral ties, officials said Tuesday. Mr. Cetin had been due to visit Jordan on June 22 but cancelled the trip because the new Turkish government was standing a vote of confidence in parliament. He is expected to arrive in Amman Sunday. He will leave for Israel Tuesday.

Egypt, Sudan to meet this month

KHARTOUM (R) — Egypt and Sudan have agreed to hold a ministerial meeting this month in a further effort to resolve disputes straining ties, a senior Sudanese official said Tuesday. Foreign Ministry First Under-Secretary Omar Yousef Barido said Sudan's ambassador to Cairo, Izzeddine Hamid had informed the government that the Egyptian side had agreed to a meeting of their two foreign ministers in Cairo before the end of July. Mr. Barido told a news briefing the exact date would be decided in the next few days. All problems preventing the resumption of normal relations between the two neighbours are due to be discussed, he added.

Saudi university don detained

NICOSIA (AFP) — Saudi police have arrested university lecturer accused of supporting the country's banned human rights committee, the London-based group Liberty said in a statement. Khaled Al Houmaidan, a lecturer in physics and chemistry at King Saud University in Riyadh, was detained Monday by police who searched his home and office and seized some documents, Liberty said. He was accused of having "links" with the human rights committee, two of whose members were arrested on May 15 and June 16 respectively.

Exiles to march

MARJ AL ZOHOUR, Lebanon (R) — The leader of 395 Palestinian expellees said Tuesday about 80 ailing exiles would march towards Israeli lines in South Lebanon Thursday. Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi said the marchers would try to give a list of 82 ill exiles to Israeli soldiers at Zemraya crossing point into Israel's "security zone" two kilometres south of their tent camp."

Party offices ransacked in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — The opposition Progressive Socialist Rally Party said Tuesday its headquarters in Tunis had been ransacked. Water from a tap deliberately opened during the break-in on Sunday night damaged the offices, party documents and a neighbouring shop, the party said. Nejib Chabbi, the party's secretary-general, said he asked the interior minister to take appropriate action and ensure the security of the party.

Syrian navy chief begins Russian visit

MOSCOW (AFP) — Syrian naval commander General Mustapha Tayara Tuesday began a one-week visit to Moscow and St. Petersburg, Itar-Tass reported. The officer was to meet with his Russian counterpart, Admiral Felix Gromov, and hold talks with the commander of the St. Petersburg naval base, Rear Admiral Vladimir Grishanov, the news agency said.

Lebanese troops fire on angry mourners

KFAR ROUMMAN, Lebanon (R) — Lebanese troops opened fire to stop a crowd of angry mourners marching in South Lebanon Tuesday, seriously wounding one man, witnesses said. They said three other men were injured by stone fragments thrown up by bullets fired by troops in front of the crowd to stop them reaching an army post in the village of Kfar Roumman. The firing forced the crowd back. The marchers were among hundreds of mourners at the funeral of a guerrilla from the Syrian-backed Amal movement killed in a clash with Lebanese troops on the outskirts of the village on Monday.

Yemen says Gulf ties on mend

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — Yemeni Foreign Minister Mohammad Salem Bassindawa was quoted Tuesday as saying that his country's relations with neighbouring Gulf Arab states, badly strained during the Gulf war, were on the mend.

In an interview with London-based Lebanese daily Al Hayat, Mr. Bassindawa said: "All of the initiatives and developments indicate thate a new era has started for Yemen and the Gulf countries, especially sisterly Saudi Arabia.

"This era will be a flourishing one and the relations will be stronger than any time before," he told the newspaper, which is published simultaneously in Beirut, Bahrain and London.

Mr. Bassindawa concluded Monday a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia that included a meeting with King Fahd.

He delivered a message to the monarch from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and held talks with Defence Minister Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz on a long-running Yemeni-Saudi border dispute.

After the meeting, Mr. Bassandawa said King Fahd had accepted an invitation to visit Yemen.

"King Fahd accepted the invitation... but a date for the visit has not been set yet," the minister told Reuters by telephone from Jeddah.

Mr. Bassandawa told Al Hayat the message to King Fahd dealt with bilateral ties, and included an invitation from the president to his brother King Fahd to visit Yemen."

He said he left King Fahd feeling "more optimistic that the Yemen-Saudi relations will soon be restored and become stronger than they were in the past."

Mr. Bassindawa was the first such ranking Yemeni official to be welcomed in Saudi Arabia since Yemen was ostracised by the Gulf states, its traditional bankrollers, during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis for siding with Iraq.

After the liberation of Kuwait in February 1991, Saudi Arabia terminated the world contracts of one million Yemenis and sent them back home.

Tension rises as Syria, Lebanon talk tough

Combined agency despatches

BEIRUT — Tension rose Tuesday after resistance forces attacked Israeli targets with rockets and mortars and the Jewish state and Syria talked tough at each other over the escalating violence and threats.

Syria warned Israel not to embark on further attacks on southern Lebanon, warning that "each assault on Lebanese sovereignty is an assault on Syria."

"Syria cannot just stand and watch the suffering and pain of her Lebanese brothers," government-run Radio Damascus said in a commentary.

"The rulers of Israel know that relations between Syria and Lebanon are founded on blood and on common destinies, and that every assault on Lebanon is also seen as an assault on Syria," the radio warned.

Radio Damascus accused Israel of having "refused to consider the question of pulling out of southern Lebanon" during bilateral discussions.

Israel then "stirred up the situation and mobilised its forces (in the region), constantly harassing the Lebanese government with large-scale operations which go against the spirit of the peace process and against the (U.N.) Security Council resolutions," it claimed.

Israel sent reinforcements to its South Lebanon "security zone," hours after guerrillas fired rockets and mortar bombs at Israeli and allied forces there, security sources said.

They said an Israeli military column of 25 vehicles, including tanks, armoured troop carriers and artillery pieces, crossed the border into Lebanon and was deploying in the western sector of the Israeli "security zone."

The latest buildup came after guerrillas fired rockets and mortar bombs at two Israeli and allied positions on the top of the buffer strip without inflicting any casualties.

It also followed a threat by Israel's army chief Lieutenant General Ehud Barak to retaliate for a stepped up guerrilla campaign against Israeli forces and their allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

"We expect the other side to (read) ... the writing on the wall and to avoid any escalation," Gen. Barak said.

"But if they will fail to do that ... I believe that the government will consider the appropriate steps and whatever it decides to be appropriate, the Israel defence forces will be ready and determined to execute effectively," he added.

Security sources who requested anonymity said the SLA gunners launched mortar bombardment on a string of villages facing the "security zone."

Israel punishes soldiers who crossed to Jordan

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israeli army said Tuesday it punished an officer and two soldiers who inexplicably drove a military car across a bridge from the occupied West Bank into Jordan before being returned.

Military sources said the officer, a lieutenant, was jailed for three weeks and fined, one soldier was jailed for two weeks, and the other was fined. Israel and Jordan are officially at war, and Israelis are not allowed to cross into Jordan.

The three reservists drove from the occupied West Bank across the King Hussein Bridge Monday. Jordanian soldiers arrested them and returned them to Israel with their weapons and papers three hours later.

The army said it did not know why they crossed the bridge. Nor was it aware of any previous such incidents. The bridge is used by foreigners and residents of the occupied territories with special permission.

The trio, all on reserve duty, claimed not to have realised they had crossed the ceasefire line. They did not resist arrest by Jordan security forces and were questioned for one hour, the spokesman said.

The Israeli army opened an inquiry into how the three got through military posts without any apparent difficulty.

"Three reserve soldiers, including one lieutenant, serving in Jericho, crossed the bridge at about 5 p.m. (1400 GMT) in a military vehicle," an army spokesman said.

"They were immediately arrested after they crossed and taken to a Jordanian police station. Upon the request of Israeli military officials the Jordanians released the three an hour later and returned them with their arms and documents.

9-year-old killed in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A nine-year-old boy died Tuesday from head wounds sustained during a clash between Israeli troops and Palestinian stone-throwers two days earlier, the army said.

Arab reports said Issar Mattar was the victim of army fire. The army said that shrapnel was found in his head, and that it was investigating the circumstances of his death.

Mattar died at Tel Hashomer Hospital in Tel Aviv, where he was brought Tuesday after the clash in the Jabalya refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Human rights groups have recently criticised the army, charging that its troops are increasingly inclined to use live fire when children are present.

Relatives told AFP that Mattar was flying a kite well away from the stone-throwers when he was hit.

Clashes erupted in nearby Shatti camp, on the edge of Gaza City, and soldiers opened fire wounding a 12-year-old and a 14-year-old boy in the legs, Palestinian sources said.

Mattar was the 41st Palestinian aged 16 and under to die in clashes with troops since last December, a sharp increase over the previous year, when 17 children were killed.

Army regulations forbid shooting at youths aged 15 or under. The army acknowledges the increase, but attributes it to a rising number of violent crowd incidents, saying that soldiers opening fire are usually unaware that children are present.

Douglas Hogg, the British minister of state for foreign affairs, toured the Gaza Strip Tuesday, and met with a group of Palestinian leaders (see story on page 10).

Also Tuesday, masked vigilantes stabbed to death a man in Gaza city, Arab reporters said. The death brought to 745 the number of Palestinians killed by fellow Arabs in the 5½ year uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories, most suspected of collaboration with Israel, drug dealing, or prostitution.

Mattar's death brought to 1,131 the number of Palestinians killed in clashes with Israelis, and 140 Israelis have also died in the violence, according to an AP count.

All people of Jordan are one family, Majali tells Al Wihdat delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — The people of Jordan are one family regardless of their origins as long as they believe in its regime, respect it, belong to it and defend it, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said Tuesday.

In a meeting at the Prime Ministry with a delegation from Al Wihdat refugee camp, Dr. Majali said: "All who believe in this land have the same rights and duties and this is something that is clear."

"We on this land are brothers in blood, faith, destiny and future," he added.

He affirmed that eventually the "righteous side will triumph in the Arab-Israeli conflict" and underlined that the Palestinian people will at the end regain their rights.

Dr. Majali reviewed with the delegation several issues, including the Middle East peace process, stressing that the Arab-Israeli negotiations since they started in Madrid have shown the Palestinian entity as a civilised, respectable entity, as was the case with the Jordanian entity. These negotiations have also highlighted the different features of the two entities, he said.

The prime minister affirmed Jordan's adherence to its national stands, reiterating that the Kingdom will never negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians and will always advocate a comprehensive solution on all tracks of negotiations with Israel.

Members of the delegation voiced their appreciation for the Jordanian government's foreign and domestic policies and its keenness to resolve all problems facing citizens and expressing their support for these policies and backing for the national unity.

The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Salameh Hammad.

Ekeus prepares report for U.N. as Iraq claims victory

Combined agency despatches

BAHRAIN — U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus, satisfied with the temporary weapons-monitoring agreements he struck with the Iraqis, prepared Tuesday to seek U.N. Security Council endorsement for the supervision plan.

Mr. Ekeus left Baghdad Monday amid euphoria that his efforts may have averted a fresh U.S.-led military strike to force cooperation with U.N. inspectors trying to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Jan Fischer, the Bahrain-based regional representative for Mr. Ekeus, said the Swedish head of the U.N. special commission was closeted with his aides, writing the report he would take to the U.N. Security Council hearing on Thurday.

The Security Council had warned last Thursday of "serious consequences" — possible air attacks — if Iraq continued blocking U.N. officials from using video cameras to monitor two missile-testing sites.

After six meetings with Iraq's deputy premier, Tareq Aziz, Mr. Ekeus said he had not only reached an interim compromise on the issue of the cameras, but had reversed Iraq's refusal to accept long-term arrangements for monitoring and verification of its weapons capabilities.

Iraq did not flatly state it accepted Security Council Resolution 715, which maps out the long-term monitoring. But Mr. Ekeus commented: "To comply is more interesting than theoretic statements. We have to live in a world of realities."

Mr. Ekeus planned to fly Tuesday night to New York, where high-level Iraqi officials promised to join him in late August or early September to discuss technical arrangements, such as future meeting places.

In the meantime, U.N. weapons experts will continue to pursue their inspections in Iraq, and a nuclear team was scheduled to arrive in the next week.

Mr. Ekeus cautioned, "it's not for me to say whether there's an end of the crisis. It's the Security Council that decides if the issue is settled in a satisfactory way."

He also warned that, while an "intolerable and impossible stalemate" had been broken, many outstanding issues remained which could cause new friction.

"We're still very suspicious" about Iraq's intentions, he said, referring to a possible Iraqi desire to rebuild its weapons of mass destruction if it ever got the chance. Mr. Ekeus said he could not even confirm that Iraq was not hiding remnants of the programmes destroyed by the inspectors since the Gulf war ceasefire.

Diplomats at the United Nations in New York said that Iraq would let the cameras be installed but they would not be turned on until further talks to flesh out the agreement on long-term monitoring. Iraq agreed in addition to inform the U.N. of any tests at the missile sites.

Iraq asserted Tuesday it had emerged "victorious" from its latest confrontation with the United Nations as hopes rose that crippling sanctions may soon be eased.

The compromise reached Monday ended fears of more U.S. air strikes.

The government daily Al Jumhuriya said Iraq had come out of the crisis "victorious" with its "head held high," and was "reaping the fruits of the glorious defence of its sovereignty."

It made no mention of the deal struck with Mr. Ekeus.

Iraq had convinced Mr. Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission for disarming Iraq (UNSCOM), of the "legitimacy of its demands," and he "undertook to ask the Security Council for at least a partial lifting of the embargo," the paper said.

It was Baghdad's refusal to consent to monitoring before the sanctions were lifted that sparked the crisis.

Mr. Ekeus conceded that there had been an "indirect link" between the talks on monitoring and the easing of the embargo.

Negotiations between Baghdad and the United Nations on resumption of oil sales were suspended last week as Mr. Ekeus flew in on a last-ditch mission to defuse the crisis.

Baghdad is negotiating to sell $1.6 billion worth of crude, primarily to buy food and medicines.

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced an emergency meeting for July 28 after prices fell on expectations that Iraq will soon be able to resume exporting oil.

Iraqi optimism on the lifting of sanctions was tempered by caution Tuesday, to judge by the black market rate of the dinar, an indicator of general confidence. However, for prices of food stuff fell

Al Jumhouriyah praised Iraqi negotiators who snatched "a pledge from Ekeus to ask the Security Council to review the embargo for the sake of removing it, at least partially."

U.N. likely to retain sanctions

THE SECURITY Council will opt Wednesday to maintain an embargo on Iraq despite the U.N.-Iraqi interim accord on long-term monitoring of Baghdad's military might, diplomatic sources said Tuesday.

The council's 15 members on Wednesday are to review the status of the embargo imposed following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. They have carried out such reviews every two months since August 1990.

As Iraq has not complied fully with all council demands, the Western sources said, it would be out of the question for the council to consider even a partial lifting of the sanctions.

The interim agreement reached in Baghdad Monday by the head of the commission responsible for Iraq's disarmament, Rolf Ekeus of Sweden, fuelled hopes in Baghdad that the sanctions crippling Iraq's economy might be eased.

Separate negotiations between the United Nations and Iraq on a possible resumption of sales of limited quantities of Iraqi oil, under international control, were suspended Thursday, at Baghdad's request. Those talks could resume in a matter of days.

Somalia programmes intact despite violence, Howe says

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — The 27-oation U.N. military coalition will have rooted out gunmen and bandits in Somalia by 1995, vowed the U.N. special envoy here.

Envoy Jonathan Howe stressed that U.N. forces will be able to withdraw oo schedule by May 1995, by which time be believes the couotry will be peaceful enough to rebuild its economy and restore social and political stability.

"There's already the start of commercial activities we're all pretty excited about," Adm. Howe, a retired American admiral, told reporters at the heavily-guarded U.N. headquarters compound.

He spoke shortly after two American military police were wounded by sniper fire in Mogadishu. The soldiers, who were not ideotified, were reported stable while undergoing treatment at the main U.S. field hospital.

Thirty-five peacekeepers have died since June 5 in attacks blamed on gunmen loyal to renegade clan leader Mohammad Farah Aideed, who controls southern Mogadishu. More than 100 U.N. soldiers have been woonded.

U.N. forces have retaliated with helicopter attacks on several compounds believed used by General Aideed's gunmen, resulting in heavy Somali casualties and triggering international criticism about excessive force by U.N. troops.

Adm. Howe said the receot violence has been largely confined to the relatively small southern portion of the capital. He said it should oot overshadow the U.N. missioo's broader achievements.

"It's time the other story was told," Adm. Howe said.

He said starvation has largely been eradicated in rural areas since the foreign military interveotion began with a U.S.-led operation in December. Schools, shut down by anarchy and famine during two years of civil war, are open again, and harvests are picking op, he said.

Displaced families, among more than 1.2 million refugees who fled the war, have begun returning to rebuild their homes and young militiamen say they are tired to fighting, Adm. Howe said.

He expressed confidence U.N. forces sooo would end weeks of anarchy in Mogadishu itself.

"In a couple of months, when we have finished our systemmatic disarmament of this city, you will be able to walk around at least with the same degree of comfort you have in Rome or New York," he said.

But for now, U.N. military officials conceded they had no control over southern Mogadishu, about 40 per cent of this city of nearly one million inhabitaots. The military estimated Gen. Aideed commands about 500 armed men in that area, said Simon Israel, spokesman for the international charity Care.

The comments came Monday during a meeting with officials of some 20 private aid organisations at which U.N. officers announced a oew licencing policy aimed at controlliog the nomber of weapons in circulation.

Most foreign civilians employ armed bodyguards, and aid workers expressed dismay at the plan. They said the new policy would have little impact on restricting weapons among militiamen and thieves.

"Humanitarian agencies are beiog asked to submit to a hureaucratic weapons poliey which will reduce their own protection," Mr. Israel said.

On Sunday, a house-to-house weapons search carried out by U.S. troops in southern Mogadisho found 11 automatic rifles, an aoti-taok missile aod a machine gun.

Gunmen riding in a stolen bus opened fire oo Italian peacekeepers later Sunday and overnight six mortar shells and machine-gun bursts were fired at the airport in the second major attack oo that facility in a week.

"We're going through a rough bump in the road," Adm. Howe admitted, but added: "We will succeed."

He said U.N. troops would continue "systematic disarmament of this city."

Adm. Howe downplayed the dispute between the U.N. and Italy, which opposes further strikes against Gen. Aideed and favours dialogue.

Adm. Howe attributed the disagreement to the "growiog pangs" of managing a multinational force.

But he rejected dialogue with Geo. Aideed a mooth after the U.N. issued a warrant for his arrest. "The only negotiations I want to have with him are behind the jail cell about the legal process he wants to clear his name," Gen. Howe told reporters.

"He said Gen. Aideed, still at large in Mogadishu, could face a Somali court if the U.N. manages to resuscitate the country's judicial system, or an international tribunal.

Amid rising fears that the world body is gettiog bogged down in the quagmire of Somalia's clan-based factional fighting, Adm. Howe said U.N. forces, now numbering more than 20,000 from 32 countries, would leave Somalia as planned "less than two years from now."

Local newspapers meanwhile, quoted Geo. Aideed as saying that "only the total evacuatioo of U.N. forces" would restore peace in Mogadishu.

Adm. Howe stressed that the famine that killed an estimated 350,000 people last year was over. He said the priority was to revive agriculture and restore political institutions in Somalia, without a government since 1991.

"Because of the progress which has been made in the relief effort, the Somali people are rapidly moving away from emergency relief operations into the longer-term challenge of rehabilitation and reconstructioo of the country's infrastructure and institutions," Adm. Howe said.

Relief workers here said 22 of 35 feedingcentres in south Mogadishu had reopened after closing for several weeks because of insecurity.

German deployment

..Germany reaffirmed Tuesday its plans to deploy some 1,700 soldiers oo a Uoited Natioos peacekeeping operatioo in Somalia despite cootroversy about risks to its troops.

Governmeot spokesman Dieter Vogel said Chancellor Helmut Kohl's cabinet had reviewed security in Somalia and decided it was safe to reinforce an advance party of oearly 300 soldiers already there.

Deployment of the main force will begin Weduesday, when 250 soldiers fly to Mogadisho.

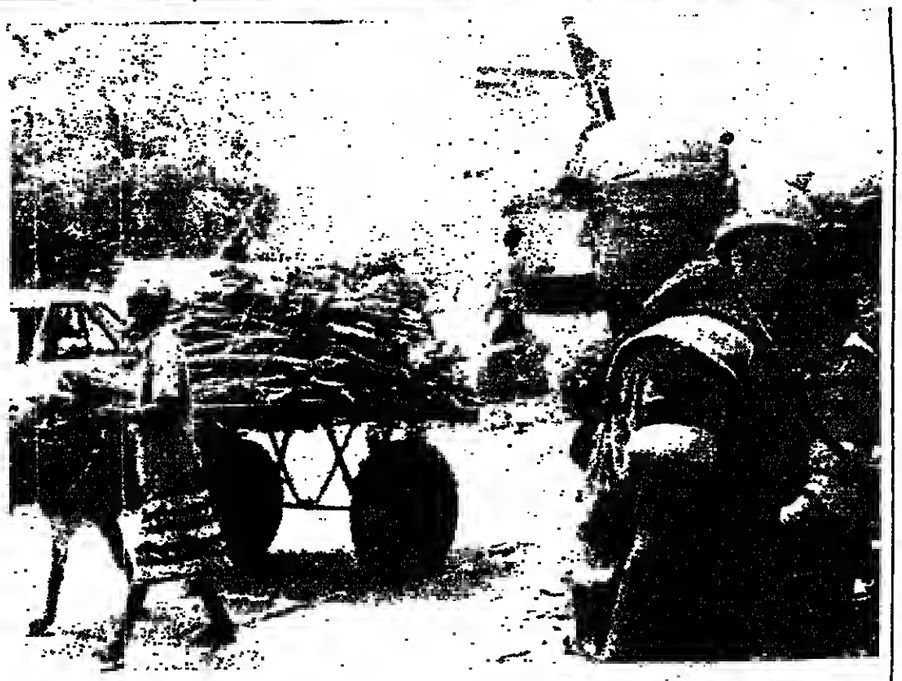
"The despatch of German soldiers and German equipment will proceed as planned," Mr. Vogel told a news conference.

"It was agreed without the slightest reservations that it would be irresponsible to withdraw the commitments we made to the United Nations, quite apart from the damage to Germany in terms of foreign policy that would result."

The operation in Somalia is the biggest land deployment of German troops outside North Altantic Treaty Organisatioo (NATO) territory since World War II and the first in which German soldiers have faced hostile fire.

The 250 soldiers leaviog Wednesday will collect heavy equipment, including armoured cars, sent by ship to Mogadishn and take op base in the town of Belet Hoeo, some 300 kilometres north of the Somali capital.

Four more flights are scheduled for the coming weeks, bringing the force to around 1,700 by mid-August.



An elderly Somali Tuesday drives his donkey cart through an Italian checkpoint near the old port of Mogadishu. U.N. envoy Jonathan Howe said Tuesday relief programmes in Somalia were not affected by the recent upsurge in violence (AFP photo)

Manning produced in U.S. court

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A man who fought more than two years to avoid extradition from Israel appeared here Monday to face charges he mailed a bomb that killed a Manhattan beach secretary io 1980.

U.S. District Judge Volney V. Brown scheduled a hail hearing Wednesday for Robert Steven Manning, 41, who is charged with mailing an explosive with the intent to kill, and aiding and abetting. Jodge Brown set Mr. Manning's arraignment for july 26.

Mr. Manning arrived Sunday night on a flight from Israel, where he had lived for most of the last decade, said Charles Almanza, chief deputy with the U.S. Marshal's Service.

Mr. Manning was accused of seoding a hoohy-trapped appliance to a computer firm, killing Patricia Wilkerson, 32.

"I'll be hack. This is all nonsense. I didn't do a thing," Mr. Manning told reporters in Hebrew as federal officers took him aboard a plane in Tel Aviv.

Mr. Manning emigrated to Israel about 10 years ago and lived in the Kiryat Arba settlement in the occupied West Bank.

American authorities were also seeking extradition of Mr. Manning's wife for a retrial in the bombing case.

Iran paper tells Russians to leave Tajiks alone

NICOSIA (AP) — An Iranian oewspaper has blamed Russia for mounting tension in Tajikistan, and said Moscow's military involvement in the former Soviet republic would lead to a repeat of the Afghan war experience.

The newspaper Jomhori-e-Islami said in an editorial that since the collapse of communism, Moscow has been sowing discord in a oumber of oewly independeot republics to keep them dependent oo Russia.

Excerpts of the editorial were carried by the Islamic Republic News Ageocy, monitored in Nicosia.

The editorial was published just before Tajik governmeot warplanes hacked by Russia bombed opposition positions east of the Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, Monday.

The air raid followed rebel attacks in which 33 Russian and Tajik soldiers were killed in the last week. Russia responded by beefing up its forces in its biggest action in the area since the Afghan war.

Russian advisers and troops in Tajikistan have beeo supporting the pro-Moscow governmeot agaiost Islamie insurgents allegedly hacked by Afghan. Afghanistan denies aiding the rebels.

Iran, a self-appointed defender of Muslim causes, backs both the Afghan guerrillas and Tajik insurgents. It has been trying to widen its influence in the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union.

The Tajiks are the only nation in the former Soviet Unioo who speak Farsi like the Iranians.

"The experience of 14 years of war in Afghanistan proved that expedition into a Muslim country could hriog oothing for the aggressive army hnt humiliatioo and disgrace," the Iranian agency quoted Jomhuri Islami as saying.

"The bitter memory of the crimes committed by the red army during its occupation of Afghanistan was being revived," it said.

It said Moscow would reap "the hatred" of the people of Tajikistan in return for its "collaboratioo with the rootless communists in massacring the Muslims.

"Moscow is always enthusiastic aboot creating crisis spots in the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union and exerts pressure on the republics with the aim of making them dependeot on Russia."

It coocloded: "Whatever motive and objective Moscow is after, the present irretrievable mistake the Russian army is making in its occupation of Tajikistan, and the military threat it poses to Afghanistan, can by oo means be justified."

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. hopes Sahara talks resume soon

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Monday he hoped talks on the Western Sahara would resume within the next few days. The U.N. chief, in a brief statement, was positive about the future of the negotiations which broke up Monday in the Western Saharan city of Laayoun without any resolotion. The talks were the first direct negotiations between Morocco and Polisario guerrillas about who can vote in a U.N.-sponsored referendum to decide the territory's status. The vote has been stalled for more than a year. Polisario guerrillas who have fought 17 years for independence of the former Spanish colooy flew back in to their main rear base near the Algerian oasis of Tindouf. After spending three days in Laayoun, they failed to agree with Morocco on the composition of the negotiating delegation sent by Rabat, a U.N. source in Laayoun said. Dr. Ghali, however, said that the general atmosphere at the "talks was good and promising."

Algerian court condemns 5 to death

ALGIERS (R) — A special Algerian court condemned five Muslim militants to death in their absence Monday for murdering two para-military gendarmes and a forestry guard, the official news agency APS reported. The special court in the western town of Oran, one of three set up to combat Muslim fundamentalist violence, also sentenced four others to life imprisonment. Only one was present in court. Five others were sentenced to between three and 10 years in jail, one was given a three-year suspeoded sentence and 13 were acquitted. A total of 30 defendants were on trial for the kidnapping and murder of two gendarmes and a forestry guard in the Frenda area 220 kilometres southwest of Algiers last February. About 155 Muslim activists have been sentenced to death by the courts since early last year during a wave of violence that has taken a heavy toll of lives among the security forces and civilian population.

Oman bans animal, bird hunting

MUSCAT (AP) — Oman has imposed a ban oo bird and animal hunting in a drive to preserve the sultanate's wildlife. A decree issued by Environment Minister Amer Ben Showain Al Hosni warned that anyone caught hunting, trapping or shooting an animal will be fined a maximum of 500 riyals ($1,290) or imprisoned for a period not exceeding three months. In the case of bird hunting, violators will be fined 100 riyals ($258). The peoalty will be doubled for second-time offenders. The Omani ban was in line with a series of measures taken by the Gulf states in recent years to protect their environment and wildlife. The drive has accelerated after Kuwait's wildlife and ecological system was virtually destroyed by the 1990 Iraqi invasion. The Omani ban allows the collection of a limited oumber of animals or birds for scientific or educational purposes, but only if a written permission was obtained beforehand from the ministry, the announcement said. "The oew decision reflects the ministry's commitment to the conservatioo of the sultanate's wildlife, particularly endangered bird and animal species," it said.

Lebanese attack government for seizing 'porno' book

BEIRUT (AFP) — More than 200 Lebanese and other Arab intellectuals have appealed to the Ioterior Ministry to lift a ban on a book branded as pornographic because it explicitly describes sexual intercourse. Abdo Wazen's book was banned for "detailing the sexual act," the Interior Ministry said. It was the censor's first banning of a publication on pornography charges in more than 20 years. The 130-page paperback, "The Garden of Senses," was yanned off bookshelves and from distributors' offices on July 9, two weeks after its publication. More than 1,600 copies of the $5 book were seized. The 36-year-old writer cannot appeal, sources close to the case said. Arab intellectuals addressed a petition to the Interior Ministry and held a news conference to appeal against the decision. They pledged to safeguard Beirut's image as "the capital of freedom and crucible of culture." In recent months, the Lebanese government has clamped down on the media. Several hailies and a television station were temporarily closed.

Judge wants death sentence for 3 Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A military judge was called for three Islamic fundamentalists found guilty of killing a suspected Palestinian collaborator to be put to death, military sources said Tuesday. The men, who hacked to death the "collaborator" from their own village with axes, were jailed for life Monday after the other two judges in the military court at Nablus on the occupied West Bank failed to agree with the death scotence. Rivhi Harsheh, Imad Toamah and Mohammad Toamah from Qussin village, members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, allegedly carried out the killing in July 1989. Justice Minister David Libai told Israel Radio Tnesday he remained opposed to the death seotence, for fear of creating "martyrs" and provoking hostage-taking. Under Israel's emergency laws "security" prisoners can be sentenced to death, but state prosecutors have never called for capital punishment.

Army halts move to set up new settlement

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers broke up Tuesday a camp set op by Jews who want to found a new settlement near Bethlehem on the site where a settler was killed, a military spokesman said. A dozen settlers, including the widow of Mordechai Lipkin, who was shot dead as he drove home to Tekoa settlement oo the occupied West Bank oo July 8, dispersed peacefully. Bobby Brown, head of the Teqoa council, said: "We would rather get the government's permission to do it. But if we can't we will set up something surreptiously when we deem the time right." Settlers carried out a seven-day vigil at the site with the army's approval but hardliners had refused to move over the weekend. The army declared the area of the makeshift camp out of bounds.

Algerian dockworkers strike

ALGIERS (AP) — Dockworkers demanding higher wages announced a strike beginning Tuesday as the military-backed governmeot struggled with 25 per cent inflation and fundamentalist violeoce. Uoion representatives for the 4,200 workers at the port of Algiers announced an "unlimited strike" beginning Tuesday. Port managers called the strike illegal and threatened to "put in place all legal means to sanction" workers who join the strike.

Latest in Tel Aviv massage parlours — fake Jews from Russia

By Neil MacFarquhar
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — In dead-end Russian provinces, a prostitute like Irina Milik might earn $10 a week. But get her a fake birth certificate showing she is a Russian Jew, hand her a ticket to Israel and within days she can pull in $400 per night in a Tel Aviv massage parlour.

The Israeli governineot picks up the tab for her airplane ticket, welcomes her with $1,250 and subsidises her income, bousiog and medical care.

Such benefits are provided under the "law of return" — Israel's promise of a homeland to all Jews. It gives anyone with a Jewish grandpareot, parent or spouse automatic entry and a helping hand.

But with some oew immigrants faking Jewish identity to milk the system, the "law of return" may have become the "racket of return."

Israeli officials say Russian crime gangs created the scam.

"It's obvious we are dealing with an organised gang with activities in both countries," Judge Moshe Shamay of Tel Aviv magistrate's court wrote in a recent decisioo.

Mr. Shamay's ruling permitted the detention in June of four men — two Israelis and two Russians — imtil the start of their trial Wednesday on charges of running brothels and defraoding the state.

Prosecutors are seeking restitution of the government benefits paid to fake Jews involved in the scam, plus jail terms for the meo.

Police also detaioed 29 women in the case, who are expected to act as witnesses. Most of the women are out oo bond. Court papers indicate 12 have confessed to being false immigraots. They face deportation.

According to Israeli officials, the Russian gangs obtaio birth certificates, passports and other papers from Jews who are staying in the former Soviet Union.

They change the photographs, give a Jewish identity to prostitutes and export them to massage parlours in Israel, where prostitutioo is legal but pimping is oot. It is not known how many prostitutes may be involved.

The women become virtual slaves guarded around the clock, often by former Russian commandoes also using forged Jewish papers, police and immigration officials said.

"Directly from the airport they go to work in massage parlours and other sex houses in Tel Aviv," said David Efrati, an interior ministry official.

Law enforcement ageocies worldwide are findiog Russian fiogerpriots on major drug smuggling, prostitutioo aod racketeering efforts.

Israel, with 450,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Unioo, believes it is becoming a target.

It used to feel immune for two reasons. Israelis considered their country too small for organised crime to bother with, and immigration was tinged with an almost sacred aura because of the "law of return."

But that has changed.

The number of massage parlours jumped from 30 to over 100 in Tel Aviv alone since immigration from the former Soviet Union started three years ago. Gangs found an unexploited market and opportuoities for other crime.

There have been two murders in Tel Aviv this year sparked by fights over controlling prostitutes, and problems like drug abuse are more evident.

Gangs are also exploiting the open-door ideal behind the "law of return" in a way the government does not quite know how to combat.

"That is why this thing is so touchy, so sensitive. It's supposed to keep this oation alive," said Hanan Gold, a criminal lawyer who specialises in defeoding Russians. "When someone is trying to touch something sacred with dirty hands it drives people nuts."

Police Minister Moshe Shahal said Israel plans to statioo police liaison officers in Russia and Ukraine by September to combat crime.

Court documents show that the 29 women detained in the case, aged 17 to 27, started getting false papers in December 1992.

Oxana Pishkona became Raisa Krasoer. Tatiana Viengerova became Tatiana Klinov and Irina Milik turned into Ludmira Zelkind.

"They learn the names, the biography of the parents, a little bit about the Jewish religion, how to light shahbat candles..." said Mr. Efrati.

In their statements to police, obtained by the Associated Press, the women described how they became virtual prisoners once they agreed to go to Israel. The sources who released the documents asked that their names not be used to protect the women.

The women were told they would have to work off a debt of $2,500 for the false papers.

"We understood that there was no way out of it and that we were imprisoned. We wanted to go to the Russian police, but we were afraid the man would kill us," one said in her deposition.

There was no doubt aboot what they were expected to do in Israel. One woman said she was told that she would have to give massages, oral sex, anal sex — anything the elient wanted.

She quoted the pimp telliog her, "you will only have sex osing condoms because an abortion is very expensive in Israel."

Police believe the four pimps took as much as 80 per ceut of the women's earnings from sex and immigrant benefits, collecting $44,000 alone from the welcome cheqoes the women received when they arrived.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 ..... Le Mythoman
19:00 ..... News in French
19:15 ..... Ushaia
19:30 ..... News in Hebrew
20:00 ..... News in Arabic
20:30 ..... Night Court
21:10 ..... The Story of Hollywood
22:00 ..... News in English
22:20 ..... Harry's Game

PRAYER TIMES

02:02 ..... Fajr
05:39 ..... *(Sunrise) Duhr*
12:42 ..... Dhuhr
16:23 ..... 'Asr
19:45 ..... Maghreb
21:16 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swelleh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terramacta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church - Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Slight rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be northerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

	Min./Max. temp.
Amman	21 / 33
Aqaba	25 /41
Deserts	18 / 38
Jordan Valley	24 / 40

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 32, Aqaba 40. Humidity readings: Amman 19 per cent, Aqaba 14 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mohammad Labada	683585
Dr. Khalil Khalil	740740
Dr. Mohammad Al Azzeh	752971
Dr. Yousef Abdo	694916
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Nairoujh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Fayez Al Qadhi	248743
Al Quds pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi	989601
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Mussher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, 8Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/50
Amal Hospital	674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

09:30 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
10:10 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
10:50 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:35 ..... London (RJ)
17:55 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)
18:25 ..... Istanbul (RJ)
18:30 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:30 ..... Brussels, Paris (RJ)
19:10 ..... Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
19:10 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:40 ..... Rome (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 ..... Dubai (AZ)
09:45 ..... Dubai (EM)
11:30 ..... Sanaa (IY)
11:30 ..... Jeddah (SU)
13:20 ..... Cairo (MS)
13:30 ..... Sharjah, Doha (GF)
17:45 ..... Karachi, Damascus (PI)
20:50 ..... Beirut (ME)
21:45 ..... Larnaca (CY)
22:05 ..... Vienna, Larnaca (OS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

10:30 ..... Rome (RJ)
11:15 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:35 ..... Berlin, London (RJ)
11:50 ..... Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
12:40 ..... Istanbul (RJ)
20:30 ..... Colombo (RJ)
20:45 ..... Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)
21:00 ..... Sanaa (RJ)
21:00 ..... Dhahran (RJ)
21:05 ..... Riyadh (RJ)
21:10 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
21:30 ..... Aden (RJ)
22:00 ..... Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:30 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45 ..... Beirut, Paris (AF)
07:05 ..... Rome (AZ)
09:15 ..... Beirut (ME)
10:45 ..... Dubai (EM)
12:30 ..... Sanaa (IY)
13:00 ..... Jeddah (SU)
14:15 ..... Cairo (MS)
14:30 ..... Bahrain, Doha (GF)
18:45 ..... Karachi (PI)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	380/200
Apricots	440/340
Banana	680 / 680
Banana (Mukammar)	620 / 620
Beans	520 / 350
Cabbage	100 / 50
Carrot	280/220
Cauliflower	180/ 100
Cherry (red)	750/600
Cucumbers (large)	100 / 50
Cucumbers (small)	170 / 120
Eggplant	170 / 50
Garlic	700 / 500
Grapes	300/200
Lemon	580 / 480
Marrow (large)	150 / 100
Marrow (small)	250 / 200
Mint	50
Okra	650/550
Onion (dry)	140 / 70
Orange	340/200
Peaches	600/500
Pepper (hot)	360 / 300
Pepper (sweet)	300 / 220
Potato	230/ 150
Tomato	130/ 60
Sweetmelon	240/150
Watermelon	140/60

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday honours the 40 years of service of Ahmad Abu Quora with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society of Jordan

Regent honours work of Ahmad Abu Quora

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday paid tribute to Ahmad Abu Quora, former head of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) saying that he had offered valuable humanitarian services to the Kingdom over the past 40 years.

Addressing a lunch held in honour of Dr. Abu Quora at Al Hussein Youth City, the Regent spoke about the victims of war and civil conflicts in Lebanon and the victims of war in Iraq, outlining Jordan's assistance to them.

Referring to the innocent trapped in current conflicts in Europe and Africa, he said 70 per cent of these people are Muslims, but the Muslims are still being accused of acts of terrorism.

He called on all concerned parties to work together to create what he called ao international law for peace based on the principles of ethics and binding on all nations.

The Regent presented Dr. Abu Quora with a token gift and thanked him for his endeavours and humanitarian services over the last four decades.

Prince Hassan also voiced Jordan's appreciation of the efforts being exerted by all voluntary and charitable organisations.

Both Dr. Abu Quora and his successor, Mohammad Al Hadid, presented speeches outlining the JNRCS services and activities in Jordan.

George Weber, the acting head of the newly opened regional office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Jordan, paid tribute to Dr. Abu Quora, and German Ambassador to Jordan Heinrich Reiners presented Dr. Abu Quora with a medal from the German Red Cross Society.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday attends military exercises performed by troops of Al Hussein Ben Ali Brigade and was briefed by the commanders on the training programmes. The exercises included target shooting with live ammunition. The Regent met with the officers and troops expressing his appreciation of their excellent efficiency and high standards. Senior army officers were present. Earlier, the Regent visited the tomb of the late King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein on the anniversary of his death. He recited verses of the Holy Koran and laid wreaths on his grandfather's tomb. Also paying their respect were members of the Royal family, the chief of the Royal Court, the prime minister, Cabinet members, members of Parliament, the chief justice, and senior army officers.

JUST to offer new graduate programme

RAMTHA (Petra) — The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) recently announced a programme of post graduate studies benefitting working students and those who lack the requirements to enter courses for their masters degrees.

The announcement was made by Abdul Majid Nuseir, dean of Post Graduate Studies, who told a press conference here that the programme will begin in the 1993-1994 academic year.

JUST created this "intermediate programme" largely to benefit those students who cannot attend classes regularly and those who had failed to get a "good" average in their first degree.

If the students taking this programme successfully complete 15 credit hours and attain a cumulative average of 75 per cent, then they are eligible to enter the masters degree programmes, and the 15 hours will be added to their file, explained Dr. Nuseir.

This programme will be applied at the university during the first, the second and the summer semesters, according to Dr. Nuseir.

He said the programme has been formulated in a manner that suits the largest number of students including those working for public and private organisations, universities, the armed forces, factories and other organisations.

He said it can be regarded as a means to enable students of various categories to acquire post graduate degrees without having to go abroad.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- Art exhibition by Syrian artist Sakhr Farzat at the Balka Art Gallery, Fuheis City.
- Art exhibition by Jamal Khmeish and Jihad Abu Suleiman at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- Art exhibition by Fadwa Al Nabulsi at the Phoenix Art Gallery.
- Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at The Gallery, Hotel Jordan InterContinental.
- Exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Ali Al Mi'mar, Hazem Al Za'bi, Abdul Raouf Sham'oun and Jalal Ureiqat at Eshbeelia Art Gallery, 6th Circle, Amra Shopping Centre.

LECTURE

- Lecture, in Arabic, entitled "Intellectuals and Power" by Dr. Khaldoun Al Shamaa at 6:30 p.m. at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

JERASH FESTIVAL

- Piano recital by Waleed Aqel at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.

Federation of Red Cross, Red Crescent Societies opens regional office in Amman to coordinate work

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS) Tuesday opened a regional office in Amman to coordinate with the national Red Crescent societies of Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

The office, in a residential area of the Shmeisani neighbourhood, was formally opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan.

George Weber, a Canadian who is the acting secretary of the regional office, said the bureau joins nine other regional headquarters of the Geneva-based federation.

In addition to its links with Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, the regional office will also serve as a base for operations in the Israeli-occupied territories at a later date, Mr. Weber said.

Addressing the gathering of dozens of foreign ambassadors and senior diplomats as well as U.N., Red Cross and Jordanian Red Crescent officials, Mr. Weber said the regional office would enable the federation "to make quick response to the extraordinary needs of the national societies in the region."

It will "help the national societies relate their efforts to the worldwide unity of purpose through the international federation," he said.

Thanking the Jordanian government and the Jordanian Red Crescent for their cooperation with the federation, Mr. Weber also paid tribute to Ahmad Abu Quora, who recently stepped down after many years of service with the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross as well as the Jordanian Red Crescent (see separate story).

"This regional office will help to bring the interest and assistance of the entire Red Cross/Red Crescent world to meet both emergency and special developmental needs of the national societies in the region," said Mr. Weber.

It will also be a focal point at which the national societies "can work together to develop unified and cooperative approaches for national society programmes regionwide," he said.

"The Red Cross/Red Crescent world is no longer divided between donor societies and others," he said. Today there is no national society that does not have some resource of worker or leader expertise, funds or supplies or experience that can benefit another society or the federation as a whole.

Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan Tuesday opens the regional office of the Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Petra photo)

"The opening of this office is one of the supremely important events in our life together as a federation dedicated to a swift and effective humanitarian service response in every world region."

A press release from the federation gave a summary of the organisation's activities in the region. It said the federation was helping not only the regular activities of the national Red Crescent but also a medical services programme initiated by the society to help returnees from the Gulf.

It expressed concern over the situation in Iraq and said the federation was working in concert with the Iraqi Red Crescent, primarily in the area of food supplies and health services.

"In response to the increasing difficulties, the federation launched, in March 1993, a renewed appeal to its member societies for support for a renewed humanitarian action," it said.

"To date, limited quantities of food and medicines have been supplied through the office in Amman, but overall the response to the appeal has been very disappointing."

In Lebanon, the federation has maintained a delegation in Beirut to advise and assist the national society in the transition to a more peaceful situation.

"The Lebanese Red Cross is a large and sophisticated organisation in many respects, but has been through a period of extreme difficulties as a result of the civil war," the federation press release said.

It described Syria as "somewhat less directly affected by the events in the region in the last few years than some of its neighbouring countries."

The federation supports and cooperates with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society at a level lower than in the other countries concerned with the office in Amman, it said.

"Nevertheless, the federation has been able to offer limited assistance to certain individual projects related to health, ambulance services, national society infrastructure and training activities," it said.

Cuban parliament supports Jordan on Middle East question

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cuban parliament has resolved to support Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the Middle East question and the Arab-Israeli peace process, said visiting Cuban parliamentarian Rodrigo Campras Tuesday.

In a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Senate Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, Dr. Campras conveyed Cuban President Fidel Castro's greetings to the Jordanian people and leadership and said that he was making the trip to the region to explain the situation in Cuba in light of the current embargo imposed on it by the United States and to discuss Middle Eastern issues.

Referring to the embargo on Cuba, the Prime Minister said Jordan understands the effects of an embargo because the Kingdom is facing a similar blockade and shipping inspections of Aqaba-bound vessels.

Dr. Majali expressed hope that Cuba and Jordan would promote bilateral trade ties.

Agreement was reached at the meeting to step up Jordanian-Cuban cooperation at the international parliamentary union meetings to promote the cause of freedom, democracy and human rights.

The Cuban envoy presented Mr. Lawzi with an invitation to visit Cuba.

Jordan, Lebanon to exchange trade ratification instruments

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket will go to Beirut Thursday for talks on promoting trade ties with Lebanon.

During the coming visit, Dr. Saket said he would exchange with his Lebanese counterpart ratification instruments of an agreement signed by the two sides last October.

With the exchange, the implementation of the trade agreement will follow, said the minister, who will be leading an official team to the talks.

Noting that Lebanon and Jordan have been witnessing increased import and export activities, the minister said Jordan will work to facilitate the exchange of goods between the two countries.

He said, since the beginning of 1993 Jordan has exported JD 8.5 million worth of national products to Lebanon and imported JD 6 million worth of goods.

Bassam Al Saket

Exports include melons and tomatoes, and imports comprise cherries, apples and other fruits under the trade agreement.

Dr. Saket was quoted as saying in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Tuesday that Jordan was trying to increase its exports to Arab countries.

Current exports barely reach 40 per cent of the country's imports.

He said Jordan still depends on foreign sources for its food and energy resources, and 44 per cent of its imports come from five countries.

The minister will be accompanied on the visit to Lebanon by two senior officials from the ministry.

The King Talal Dam is the major reservoir of water used to irrigate farms in the Jordan Valley

JD 2.3m contract goes to local firm to improve irrigation

AMMAN (Petra) — A local firm, Concord Company, Tuesday won a JD 2.349 million contract to improve the irrigation system in the central Jordan Valley by increasing the irrigated area by 40,000 dunums.

Under the agreement, signed by Abdul Aziz Wishah, secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), the company will set up water pumping stations along the King Abdullah Canal, make adjustments to the present dam on the Zarqa River and lay a set of concrete pipes in several areas within 15 months.

According to Dr. Wishah the project would allow water from several sources to pour into the Jordan Valley irrigation system. The mixing of water from the King Talal Dam and the King Abdullah Canal would improve the quality of water supplied to the farmlands, he added.

Dr. Wishah said the project would increase agricultural production and create jobs for 50 workers.

Meanwhile, in Ramtha, the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) has started replacing the old water network with a new 175-kilometre pipeline at an overall cost of JD 3.5 million.

WAJ said work on the project was expected to be completed before the end of 1993.

British envoy says Hogg visit reflects common approach to peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — British Ambassador to Jordan Patrick Eyers Tuesday described British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Douglas Hogg's visit to the Kingdom as positive and successful.

Mr. Hogg's talks here showed that Britain and Jordan follow the same approach towards enabling the Arab-Israeli peace talks achieve headway, said the ambassador in an open dialogue with members of the Rotary Club at Philadelphia Hotel.

Mr. Hogg Tuesday morning wound up his two-day visit to Jordan and crossed the King Hussein bridge to start a visit to the Israeli occupied West Bank.

He had discussed Middle Eastern affairs and the peace process with government officials and held a meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Paying tribute to Jordan for participating in the U.N. peace keeping forces around the world, the ambassador said Jordan and Britain maintain strong ties and British media is keen on publishing the truth about the situation in the Middle East.

Calling for fresh efforts to be made to ensure the success of the peace process, the ambassador expressed the view that what has been achieved in the peace talks was positive.

The British government has not recognised the eastern part of Jerusalem as part of Israel, nor of Israel's occupation of Arab land; and it has supported U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian land and the recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, recalled Mr. Eyers.

The ambassador refused to draw a contrast between the situation in Bosnia and the Iraqi incursion into Kuwait. He said while a civil war is being waged in former Yugoslavia, Kuwait was occupied by Iraq.

Britain is seeking to resolve the conflict in Bosnia through peaceful negotiations and London is neutral in this crisis and determined to prevent one party from achieving any gains over the other through ethnic cleansing and sectarian conflict, added the ambassador.

Referring to the Arab and Islamic countries demand that the Bosnians should arm themselves for self-defence, the ambassador said that was impractical because of geographic reasons. The terrain, he said, does not allow for such a move since any arms shipments would have to go through Croatia, which would never allow the arms to reach the Bosnians.

The people of Britain are sympathetic towards the Bosnian Muslims and British forces currently guard the supply routes reaching the Bosnian people, said the ambassador.

There are 3,200 British troops in Bosnia and 425 British vehicles carrying food supplies to the Bosnian people, he added.

Mr. Eyers said Britian has so far sent food supplies to the Bosnian people worth more than $200 million.

Asked whether the British government's stand would have been different had the Bosnians been Jews, the ambassador said that the attitude would not differ.

He said Muslims living in the United Kingdom exceed in number the Jews living there. Being a democracy, he said, Britain can, by no means, show any bias towards one party against another.

REVELLING AT JERASH: Young fans delight in a performance by Lebanese singer Ragheb Alameh at one of Monday evening's Jerash Festival events (Staff photo by Aynsley Floyd)

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Public consultative council holds 1st meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 15-member public consultative council set up earlier this month to help the Amman governor deal with issues of concern to residents held its first session Tuesday and reviewed the council's terms of reference and programme. It was the first meeting of the group which represents various sectors in the greater Amman region, but "we decided to hold regular meetings at least once a month, said Haidar Murad, a council member.

Seminar to review effects of smoking on women

KARAK (Petra) — The National Committee for Combatting Smoking will Sunday hold a seminar on the effects of smoking on women's health. Specialised doctors from the private and public sectors will participate in the seminar which will discuss the effects of smoking on pregnant women and on embryos, the heart and arteries, as well as on women's beauty.

JEA to start maintenance training

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) will start next month organising training courses for engineers in the maintenance of machine and medical equipment as well as in the use of computers. The course, to be organised in cooperation with the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) in cooperation with the Jordanian Armed Forces, will last 7-8 months, according to Director of the Training and Employment Department at the association Hisham Khreisat. He said these courses are organised by the association as part of the annual programmes offered to provide training for new graduates.

Turkish minister to visit Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Turkish foreign minister is expected to arrive in Amman Sunday at the head of an official delegation on a three-day visit to Jordan. The Turkish official will hold talks with senior Jordanian officials on Jordanian-Turkish relations and regional issues.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

جوردن تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: **667171/6, 670141-4**
Telex: **21497 ALRAI JO**
Facsimile: **661242**

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Hassle for common good

LESS THAN a month before the end of the registration period for Parliamentary elections, registration centres are reporting alarmingly low turnout all over the Kingdom. And the few who have registered are coming back with tales that would discourage the undecided among the country's eligible voters and lend credence to the arguments of those who have already chosen to stay away from the ballot boxes.

This apathy is sure to bode ill for the democratisation process, since electing a Lower House of Parliament that is not truly representative of a majority of our people is a drawback in itself. It goes without saying that voter apathy plays right into the hands of large well-organised political groups which can save their electorate the hassle of going through the cumbersome registration process and register for them. The result: a high voter turnout in such constituencies, thus tipping the scale in favour of the one or two political groups that can tap their organisational resources. Individual and independent voters who are not willing to wait long hours at registration centres will lose their right to vote and, also like in 1989, organised political groups will have far more seats than they deserve in the House.

That should not be allowed to happen.

The government has a responsibility to provide voters with all the facilities that would encourage them to participate in drawing the political orientation of their country. It has to cut down on red tape and bureaucracy, and it has to make the process as easy and smooth as possible.

Citizens should not have to wait for hours before they can register, and their applications should not be blocked by unnecessary delays and bureacratic measures. Furthermore, those civil servants who are paid to attend the registration centres should be more accommodating to citizens' needs and inquiries. Above all, the government has yet to explain to citizens, comprehensively and thoroughly, what is expected of them, why and how they can do it.

We are aware of the limited media campaign launched by the executive to encourage voters to show up at the registration centres. But this campaign should be intensified and clarified. The effort should be commensurate with the importance of the issue at hand. So far it has not been, and we may be lucky that time has not run out on us. But if the government does not or is not willing to make the process easier, Jordanians should, and for a very good reason, accept to suffer the red tape and register for voting. It is their future that would be greatly affected by the outcome of the elections, and it is they who stand to suffer from greater unemployment, poverty, pollution, bureaucracy and inefficiency of the system. A Parliament well representative of its people and qualified to tackle their problems is worth the, though unnecessary, few hours of waiting at the registration centres and haggling with some entrenched bureaucrats.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday discussed a mission in Baghdad by Rolf Ekeus, the U.N. envoy, pointing out the latest agreement he had reached with the Iraqi government. Mr. Ekeus' statement, about a positive outcome of his talks in Baghdad, is the first of its kind ever since Iraq invaded Kuwait, noted the daily. It said Mr. Ekeus' statement that the Iraqi position is positive is directed at the United States rather than the United Nations, to make it understand that the Iraqis are really concerned about the implementation of all U.N. resolutions and that the world community ought to respond to such a favourable stand. The paper recalled that the United States had been practising a terrorist campaign against the children and women of Iraq and has used the trial of a group of men in Kuwait for allegedly attempting to kill George Bush as a pretext to launch aggression on the Iraqi people. Now we consider Mr. Ekeus' statement at this stage as a very constructive development on the part of the United Nations, which, the paper said, should put an end to the blackmail Washington has been exercising over the past three years against the weaker nations of the world. The paper welcomed the U.N. envoy's statement as giving new hope for the beginning of the end of the Western conspiracy against the Arab people of Iraq.

AL DUSTOUR Arabic daily called on the European nations to play a complementary role to that of the United States in trying to give impetus to the peace process in the Middle East region. The daily cited a statement by the visiting British minister of state for foreign affairs, Douglas Hogg, in which he implied that London might be contemplating new ideas to remove the obstacles in the path of the peace process. It said that Mr. Hogg's current tour of the Middle East region to help remove the obstacles in the path of peace is a welcome development on the part of Europe. We find this move as a chance for Europe to resume its more active role to bring about a settlement to the Arab Israeli conflict, said the paper. It is indeed necessary, added the paper, to find a way to break the deadlock in the current negotiations and end Israel's intransigent position. The paper said that the Europeans can and ought to take a meaningful step towards ending the Israeli repression and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

When cowboy hats replace blue berets

By Conor Cruise O'Brien

The relationship between the United States and the United Nations has been assuming some disturbing shapes. Inevitably, the U.N. has always been powerfully affected, and its course often directed, by U.S. foreign policy. But in 1993 there is a clear danger that the U.N. may become a tool of U.S. *domestic* politics. If that happens, the shadowy but always potentially valuable moral authority that the U.N. possesses will soon become exhausted. By controlling that authority and then abusing it for purely internal purposes, Washington will have destroyed the U.N. International anarchy — widely prevalent as it is — will then become an unmitigated condition.

The subordination of the United Nations to U.S. domestic politics is not a remote danger. In some areas it is already an established fact, though we may still hope it is not an irreversible one. The pattern is as follows: the American public approves of spectacular U.S. acts of international violence — but only *if* these are not accompanied or followed by heavy American casualties, and provided also that they are perceived as virtuously motivated. Air strikes meet the first condition. The blessing of the U.N. meets the second. So air strikes with the blessing of the U.N. are the ticket. As President Clinton has found, these are an effective remedy for ailing poll-ratings. The cartoonists, naturally quicker on the draw than many commentators, have already detected this connection.

There may be cases in which a given action is *both* conducive to presidential popularity and also in accordance with the vital interests of global stability and of the West in particular. Desert Storm was such a case. The recent bombings of military-industrial targets in Iraq may be another. But there is one case where air strikes, with the blessing of the U.N., are being used for the benefit of presidential ratings and for no other purpose. This is Somalia.

The avowed objectives of the U.N. in Somalia are, first, to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid, and then to encourage the emergence of stable and peaceful political conditions. The second objective is certainly remote and probably chimerical; in any case it is not necessarily served by bombing Somalis in the here and now.

The urgent objective is the distribution of humanitarian aid and this is not promoted but frustrated by actions like the American bombings. The testimony of aid workers on the ground is conclusive on that point. They know that the raids endanger their lives, as well as their capacity to help. Infuriated Somalis, like those who killed four journalists after last week's bombings, are quite as likely to attack aid workers. Those workers are now distancing themselves from the U.N., which was originally there to help them, because the U.N.'s blessing for the air strikes puts them in danger.

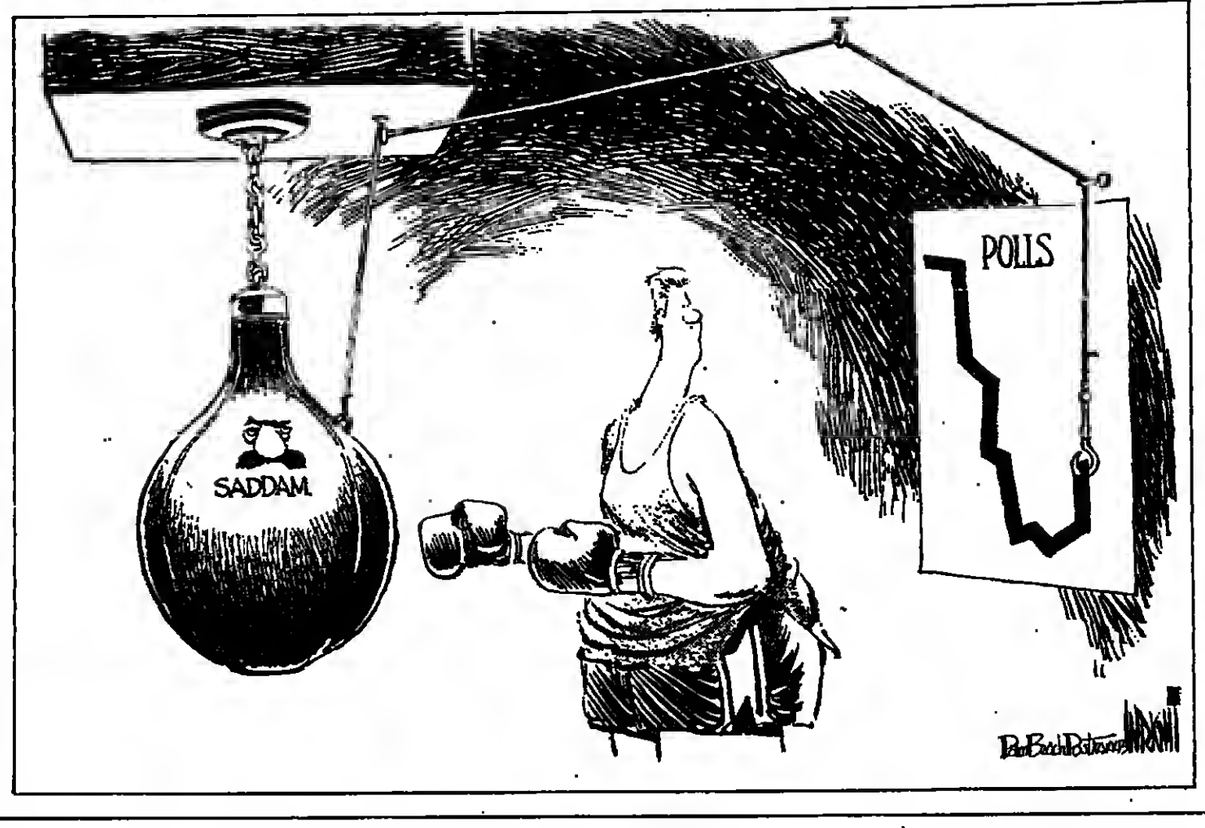
The operation in Somalia has turned into a macabre, kind of western. The guy in the black hat is General Mohammad Farah Aideed. The guy in the white hat is retired Admiral Jonathan Howe, the special envoy of the U.N., who is, of course, an American. No one who is experienced in the ways of the U.N. — even in days when U.S. authority over it was much less than it is now — will suppose that this particular special envoy is under the control of the Secretary-General, Boutros Ghali. In theory, of course, the primary commitment of a senior U.N. official is to the U.N. In practice, where a senior official belongs to a big country he remains in the service of his country in matters where its interests are affected. In the case of the United States, this means all matters of importance. In particular, where an American is in charge of a U.N. operation in the field, that operation will be run to U.S. requirements.

There was a classic case of U.S.-U.N. control at the moment of truth in the Congo, in September 1960. Andrew Cordier, the senior American official in the U.N. Secretariat, was sent to head the U.N. operation in the Congo, at a time when the Americans wished to get rid of the country's Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Cordier put all the local machinery of the U.N. at the disposal of the CIA, so leading to Lumumba's political destruction, and later to his murder.

Admiral Howe is in political charge of U.N. operations in Somalia. The nominal U.N. military commander is Turkish, but it is reliably reported that U.N. forces are led in practice by an American major-general, Thomas Montgomery. What is supposed to be a U.N. operation is an American-run operation, conducted with an eye to presidential ratings, and not to any Somali needs, nor to the needs and lives of aid workers or soldiers of various nationalities serving the U.N. on the ground, of whom 35 have been killed and 137 wounded in the past month.

The situation is taking on an eerie resemblance to a programme proponnded for former Yugoslavia in the closing months of the Bush administration by a former U.S. Air Force general, Michael J. Dugan. This was a plan for massive military intervention in both Bosnia and Serbia, with Britain, France and Italy supplying the ground forces, and America the air power. Somalia is like that, except that it is on a lesser scale and the countries supplying the ground forces, and sustaining the casualties, are more numerous. The Italians have protested strongly against what the Americans are doing and the French have given them some support. It is essential that other countries, including Britain, should join in the pressure. We had hoped that Dr. Ghali would soon join in. His silence about what amounts to the hijacking of the U.N. operation in Somalia has not been to his credit. Even less creditably, he appears to be following the U.S. line, which his spokesman, Joe Sills, implicitly ascribes to the Security Council. This interpretation needs to be challenged at the Security Council.

The policies pursued under Admiral Howe have increased the sufferings of the Somalis and of those who have been trying to help them. The same policies are bringing the U.N. into a discredit that may be terminal. Britain and France should make it clear to the Clinton administration that this is not acceptable. In doing so, they should call for the early replacement of Admiral Howe. The admiral is, of course, only the monkey, but it would teach the organ-grinder in the White House a salutary lesson — The Independent.



Dr. Abdulla Malki is on leave until Sept. 1, 1993

Islam — a complex ideology that should not be excluded

By Robin Wright

WASHINGTON — Fifteen years ago this month, an obscure religious figure, in exile in Iraq's southern city of Najaf, declared that the ideology, goals and leadership of the bubbling unrest in neighbouring Iran was, and would remain, exclusively Islamic.

His bold pronouncement went largely unnoticed by the outside world, in no small part because the idea of an Islamic state in the 20th century seemed so ludicrous. Even many marching in opposition to the shah back home took little heed of what, at the time, appeared largely political bravado.

But within seven months, Tehran's monarchy imploded. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was no longer obscure. And the world was captivated — then literally held captive — as the first modern theocracy took root in the renamed Islamic Republic of Iran.

Now, 15 years later, Islam is the most energetic and dynamic political idiom in the Mideast and beyond:

— More Islamic republics — Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan — have been born or reborn. Other states now ensure that new laws do not violate Muslim codes or customs. Most of the 75 countries with large Muslim populations are far more sensitive about everything Islamic, from holidays to dietary traditions.

— Islamists have won elections in most Muslim states now experimenting with political pluralism — in places as desparate as Socialist Algeria, the monarchies of Jordan and Kuwait, and quasi-democratic Egypt.

— Hundreds of Islamic political movements have emerged in countries from Morocco to the former Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan, and from China's western Xinjiang province to Indonesia.

Yet, the United States is basically still watching events unfold from afar, disengaged, often as surprised as it was by Iran's revolution — and as it was last week when a plot by Islamic extremists to blow up several New York landmarks was aborted.

For all these reasons, it's time, finally, for the United States to stop skirting the issue of Islam, to stop equating political Islam with what's happened in Persian Iran or Arab Lebanon or African Sudan, and to stop treating Islam as a cultural adjunct of a state.

For the first time in its history, the United States should develop a tangible and realistic foreign policy on a religion. Engaging Islam is the only way to undermine the extremist that, with the World Trade Centre bombing and aborted conspiracy plot to blow up the United Nations and other New York city spots, has now arrived on American shores.

Failure to act such a policy will almost certainly generate greater alienation and polarisation, more attempts to lash out or terrorise and feel the political backlash that can stir up opposition to unrelated events like the U.S. missile strike on Baghdad.

The policy need not necessarily cover religion generically. Nor all religions, even though political activism has grown among most faiths. As the world's only religion that offers rules by which to govern a state, as well as a set of spiritual beliefs, Islam is unique.

So far, the United States has taken steps either too tepid and tentative or totally shortsighted.

In its last year, the Bush administration backed into a position by pronouncing that Islam was not the next "ism" threatening either the West or the world and by acknowledging the differences between political and extremist Islam. But U.S. officials usually tied the surge of political Islam to economic decline and desperation. But this link implies that righting economic injustices woud return Islam to the personal domain and politics to the secular.

That fact might have worked in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but it is no longer enough. The Islamic agenda — and appeal — now goes too deep.

In the first six months, the Clinton administration picked up where its predecessor left off, but added a new twist with a new "dual-containment" policy aimed at Iraq and Iran. Tehran's programme to produce weapons of mass destruction, its opposition to the peace process and its support of terrorism are the chief reasons. While each is a legitimate reason not to resume relations, this approach is flawed and, to a certain degree, dishonest.

The current U.S. approach is still largely based on the traumatic U.S.-Iranian encounters in the early years after the 1979 revolution, when Tehran's Islamic rule was the only visible symbol of the Muslim revival and dealing with Iran was the most viable means of dealing with political Islam.

But a strategy designed to contain Islam by containing Iran no longer applies, because the overwhelming majority of Islamists — from underground cells and political parties to new Islamist officials — no longer took Iran, if they ever did, as a model or even a primary resource. With the initiative and momentum having moved far beyond Iran, the United States and its Western allies should take a series of dramatic steps to engage Islam — always in the context of broader goals globally — over the next few years.

Economically, the United States must reduce its dependence on foreign oil, whether by expanding exploration at home, by accelerating development of alternative energy sources, or both. As long as America is dependent on imports, the U.S. agenda in the Mideast and adjacent regions will be shaped by economic exigencies rather than political priorities or principles. If oil were less vital to U.S. industry, many Gulf states, for example, would probably not be deemed such good friends.

While some would remain important for strategic reasons, establishing relationships on a more realistic footing would free the United States form the pressures of countries — like Saudi Arabia — that use Islam to support undemocratic regimes. Just last week, Amnesty International reported executions in the kingdom had reached "shocking proportions" with a fourfold increase in people beheaded.

The U.S.-Saudi relationship has particularly shaped American policy on Islam, setting the standard for what and how Muslim states are dealt with, often in erratic and uneven ways — such as providing advanced arms to Afghanistan's holy warriors while firing at Lebanon's Muslim militias in the mid-1980s.

Politically, Washington must use the same standards applied elsewhere in determining allies and trade partners.

Democracy has made the fewest inroads in countries in the Muslim World. And among the most egregious violators of human rights are authoritarian regimes in the Muslim World. Yet, too often the United States backs away from taking measures under which pluralism could lead to the election of Islamists.

"There seems to be an almost automatic prejudgment that political Islam or Islamist states are bad for the U.S. interests — a trend evident in negligible U.S. action on repression in places as disparate as Algeria, Bosnia and Kazakhstan.

Yet, the success in Jordan, where the boldest experiment with democracy in the Arab World resulted in the election of Islamists as the largest bloc in the revived parliament, coupled with attempts by Islamists in Algeria, Egypt and elsewhere to work within the system, should finally put to rest the argument that Islam and democracy are incompatible.

Militarily, Washington must diminish or cut off access to the arms, intelligence data and training programmes that facilitate repression by undemocratic governments.

All the arms sales in the world will not ensure the survival of an unjust system, a lesson powerfully taught (if not learned) in Iran, when the sixth largest army in the world, trained and armed largely by the United States, could not hold off change.

Furthermore, any containment policy should be directed first and foremost at undemocratic regimes and states violating human rights. No religion can be contained. There's a double standard in ordering Iraq to take meaningful steps towards democracy as a precondition for lifting sanctions and improving relations while hosting officials of the Algerian junta who aborted the first democratic elections for parliament on the eve of a clearcut Islamic victory.

There's also a double standard by holding Iran accountable for its death edict against Salman Rushdie, author of "The Satanic Verses", while saying nothing publicly about the beheading in Saudi Arabia last year of Sadiq Abdul Karim Malallah for "slandering God and the Prophet Mohammad."

Overall, the policy goal must be not only to allow but actively encourage Islamists to come to power by democratic means and to experiment with ways that blend political pluralism and Islam. Change that is gradual and evolutionary must be rewarded.

To isolate extremism, which can thrive only when Islam is totally excluded, the best thing is to bring political Islam into the world system; make it accountable both home and to the international community. Put it to the test by asking it to find means to implement its often grandiose and utopian promises. And let it share the burdens facing other Third World states.

Dealing with political Islam foursquare as an indeology — and upholding it to the same standards as other systems of government-will be far easier. Should Islamist regimes then violate human rights standards or accepted international norms, the outside world can hold them accountable without appearing anti-Islamic and without endangering a full-scale cultural clash — The Los Angeles Times.

Hungry Kurds yearn for the 'good old days' under Saddam

By Amberin Zaman

EVERY FRIDAY during noon prayers, the chief imam at Al Bakir mosque informs his congregation that "once again" the Kurds have been "betrayed by the West."

"They promised us money, they promised us food. They gave us nothing," he cries as hundreds of Kurds nod vigorously in assent.

Such is the mood across much of Iraqi Kurdistan, where the threat of starvation has led an increasing number of Kurds to yearn for the "good old days" under President Saddam Hussein.

"Who cares about freedom on an empty stomach?" asked Mr. Sbeman Shahour, whose pre Gulf war salary of 400 Iraqi dinars a month was the equivalent of £866.

"I used to be able to feed, clothe and educate my children, and save. Now 400 dinars is barely enough to buy two bags of rice. Of course I miss Saddam."

Just months ago, such talk would have been unthinkable about the dictator, who ordered the deaths of thousands of Kurds and razed 4,000 of their villages.

Now the joint leaders of Iraqi Kurdistan, Mr. Massoud Barzani and Mr. Jalal Talabani, are openly talking about resuming negotiations with Baghdad.

"We have three options: to starve, to become refugees in Iran and Turkey again, or to talk to Baghdad," said Mr. Barzani at his mountain headquarters in Salahuddin.

International relief agencies paint an equally bleak picture. According to Mr. M.A. Piracha, who co-ordinates the U.N. relief efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan, less than 10 per cent of the funds required to meet emergency assistance for this year has been raised so far.

"Come winter and no funds, and we are potentially faced with a full-scale humanitarian disaster," he said.

"I know of at least two women who sold their babies because they couldn't feed them. Countless others are now reduced to eating boiled grass, ripping tar off the roads for fuel, and it is getting worse all the time," said Mr. Graham Kenna, of UNICEF. "Western donor commitment doesn't seem to be there."

Mr. Barzani, who recently returned from a tour of the European capitals and Washington, can barely conceal his bitterness.

"Last year, the Bush administration promised us $15 million," he said. "This year, Clinton promised us $23 million. So far, we have received nothing."

Observers point out that, with Baghdad unable to take care of its own people, there is little it can do for the Kurds. "All this talk about resuming negotiations with Baghdad is a last-ditch attempt to draw western attention to their plight," a diplomat said.

"I used to be able to feed, clothe and educate my children, and save. Now 400 dinars is barely enough to buy two bags of rice. Of course I miss Saddam."

The shared fear among relief agencies and Kurdish officials now is that Saddam Hussein will seize the crisis in Kurdistan as an opportunity to take revenge for the recent U.S. missile attack on the intelligence headquarters in Baghdad. Despite allied air protection, 30,000 Republican Guards encircling the Kurdish safe haven shell Kurdish border villages almost daily and burn their crops.

U.S. army Col. Gerald Thompson, serving with the Allied Military Co-ordination Centre in Zakho, said they can "engage in any sort of military action within hours." To make matters worse, the Iranians have mounted artillery attacks along their side of the border. Mr. Talabani said Iranian planes have bombed his territory 60 times since April 19, killing eight civilians and wounding countless others.

Mr. Talabani added: "If the West doesn't do something fast, we shall have to pick up our guns and return to the mountains. In the end, they remain the Kurds' best and only friends" — Daily Telegraph.

Patience and force — what should U.N. use?

By Robert H. Reid
The Associated Press

IT'S A tale of two missions — force in Somalia, patient negotiatioo io Bosnia-Herzegovina. Neither operation has stopped the bloodshed. Both appear in danger of collapse.

Such is the dilemma facing the United Nations as it evolves ioto the role of global policeman after the end of the era of superpower confrontation.

What is the right mix of force, diplomacy and humaoitarian assistance to achieve peace? Clearly, the U.N. has not found the formula.

"The good old days of traditional peacekeeping are long gooe, I think forever," said retired Canadian Gen. Lewis MacKenzie, former U.N. commander in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Nobody knows what to do."

In Somalia and Bosnia, the U.N. has found that when it comes to force, it's a matter of "damned if you do, damned if you don't."

The 15,000 U.N. troops in Bosnia provide security for food distributioo and other humanitarian aid. This involves escorting convoys through areas of conflict and ensuring the safety of U.N. personnel.

But the U.N. military operation began last year without a clear political strategy for ending the conflict. Its troops have neither the authority nor the means to stop fighting among Serb, Croat and Muslim forces, apart from bluff and persuasion.

That has severely impaired the humanitarian mission. With Sarajevo and other major cities under siege, hundreds of thousands of Bosnians survive on U.N. humanitarian aid.

But Croat and Serb militias from time to time refuse to allow aid convoys through their lines. U.N. officers wind up begging militia commanders for permission to perform the job given them by the Security Council in far-off New York. Often, permission is deoied.

But events in Somalia show that force too has its limitations. Somalia was the first time since the Korean war in which U.N. forces were mandated to impose peace by force.

With that mandate, the U.N. refused to negotiate with those branded as "terrorists" and launched airstrikes oo strongholds of warlord Mohammad Farrah Aideed. The attacks have failed to dislodge Gen. Aideed and instead brought reprisal attacks io which more than 30 U.N. peacekeepers have beeo killed since June 5.

Italy, the former colonial power in Somalia, has threatened to pull oot of the 27-nation force because of objections to the hard-line strategy. Critics argue the U.N. should place more emphasis on humanitarian operations.

U.S. special envoy David Shinn, the top coordioator for Somalia in the State Department, admits the operation in Somalia has led to "some negative lessons" which will force a reevaluation of the U.N. strategy in the east African country.

But the experience in Bosnia-Herzegovioa raises questions whether a humanitarian missioo can function effectively without a degree of force.

Bosnian government officials complain bitterly that for all of its supposed authority and power, the United Nations, and by extension the entire international community, has allowed itself to become hostage to bands of nnruly gunmen.

U.N. officials in Bosnia fear privately that hnmanitarian donations will eventually dry up because of frustration over the lack of progress toward a settlement.

Mueh of the problem with U.N. peacekeeping operations lies in the structure of the international organisation itself.

The mandate, goals and rules of engagement for peacekeeping forces must be approved hy the Security Council, dominated hy the five permaneot members: the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China.

"The decision-making process within the Security Council is 45 years out of date," Gen. MacKenzie said. "Decision by committee results in a policy of the lowest common denominator acceptable to all parties."

Furthermore, non-permaneot Security Council members such as Canada, India, Spain and Italy, which have contributed sizeable forces to U.N. operations, feel hypassed tn decisions which effect the lives of their own troops.

Gen. MacKenzie and others believe that in Somalia and Bosoia-Herzegovina, the U.N. strayed dangerously past the limits of its 1945 Charter, which sanctions involvement in civil conflicts if they threaten international peace.

But it is debatable whether the crises in Bosoia and Somalia, horrible as they may be in human terms, consitute such a threat.

The benefits of honest, hard work

By Radi M. Annab

A few days ago I stopped at the traffic lights of what was previously known as the Sixth Circle, oo my usual route home after work. And as usual, I reached for my wallet to find change when I saw three or four little boys roam amoog the cars, some selling "chicklets", others flowers ot plastic trash bags. I had no change. My wiodow was up, as the air conditioning was on in the car, so when one of the little boys, no more than ten years old, with skin scorched by the strong summer sun, approached my window I did not lower the window. Perhaps I could not bring myself to tell him that I had no change. The child did not leave and I understood that he wanted to tell me something, as he was pointing at my car compartment. "I have no change," I said in Arabic as I lowered the car window.

"You have no change," he said, "then why don't you sell me a cigarette?"

A cigarette!!

Is that what I had been spending my mooey on? I suddenly realised that I had been giving money to boys not older than 10 every day and for what? Cigarettes? I had been fooling myself, thinking that I was doing something good, humanitarian; thinking that these kids were not begging, hui selling things and I was contributing to their profit, which they would use to huy food, clothing, medicine.

I could not say anything to the boy. I only looked at him angry at first and then sad.

Since then I have stopped reaching for my wallet when I stop at traffie lights. I have been disillusioned. Can you blame me?

But this encounter has made me realise that something must be done. These children are part of a future generation that will have to endure even more than past generations have. The burden that people of all developing nations must bear will be far greater io the future than it is today, as the gap between rich and poor nations widens, and as international conflict changes from one between ideologies to one between civilisations.

By the time this 10-year-old boy I eocountered is 20, he will be reduced to an unproductive, unhealthy smoker, who spends a substantial part of his low salary on his childhood habit.

Productivity is an essential element in economic development, and the only way this country will ever achieve the goal of becoming a developed nation is through high individual productivity.

The solution? Why not start with these children? Why not with their parents? I am a firm believer that home plays a crucial role in the development of a child into an adult and productive worker. It is time that this country's government does something (and really does something) to educate the parents or guardians of these children so that they, in turn, can teach their kids to be productive as adults. What I mean hy productive is work efficiently at whatever one does and learn to save money (in a desperate attempt to reduce our heavy reliance on foreign aid). Jordan is full of jobs but the mentality of the Jordanians seems to be an obstacle to such progress.

The fact is that Jordanians are not willing to do certain jobs and many prefer to beg rather than do, what they consider, menial jobs. We have a huge population of foreigners from countries like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Egypt working as nurses, house maids, builders, cleaners, sweepers and garbage collectors. These are not menial jobs. They are not to be looked down upon. These are jobs and that is what is important. Why should foreigners reap the benefits, while Jordanians sit idle? Why should I have to give the "Eid gift" to an Egyptian garbage collector and not a Jordanian one?

Moreover, Jordan suffers from unemployment of the educated. Our heavy reliance on foreign aid over the years has led to unnatural growth, especially in our service sector, aod has raised the standard of living and education with no economic basis to support such growth. Thus, for a while, Jordanians must learn to work below their capabilities. We must stop importing labour and use our own labour force. This does not mean that we must stop exporting labour. In fact, we must try to reduce unemployment by both exporting excess edocated labour that the country cannot use and by replacing foreign workers with less educated Jordanian workers.

This is not an easy task and changing the mentality will require many years, but the benefits of real and serious action will last for centuries.

The writer is studying economics at Harvard University. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Ethnic queuing — new world disorder

By Chan Heng Chee

Nicolae Asciu/IHT

ROME — I had arrived at Rome's Leonardo Da Vinci Airport early in the morning, heading for a vacation in Tuscany. Two immigration booths were opened, one for holders of Italian and European Community passports, ooe for "others." More than a dozen African nationals were already in line, each obviously undergoing long and thorough questioning.

From my planeload, the Italians and British quickly sailed through the Italian and EC counter. Our line did not move. After 15 minutes, a few Australians switched to the EC counter. They were waved through. Other Australians, looking askance at the improper advaotage, stayed in the queue. After another 10 minutes of no movement, they, too, crossed the lioe aod went through. A large Japanese tour group, oewly arrived, was immediately directed to the EC counter, passing without delay.

Three Hong Kong arrivals, highly impatient hy oow, walked up to the EC counter hut were sent back. The Southeast Asians — Thais, Malaysians and Singaporeans, including myself — looked at one another and shrugged.

More than an hour after we had joined the queue, following protests to airport officials and amid visible restlessness, a third counter was opened.

There was now a line for Africans, one for Asians and others, and one for Italians, EC and selected countries. A pale and sallow young man in hlue jeans, of Caucasian origin, had been in the queue before me all this time. Why did he not use the EC gateway? "What country do you come from?" I asked. "Poland," he replied, with a toueh of resignation.

The categorisation hy Italian airport officials and the self-categorisation by those in the lines had been made quite crudely on perceptions of who came from rich countries and who came from poor countries. Was this a foretaste of things to come in the new world order? Or was it an isolated case in a society that improvises as it goes along, and for which rules and established procedures are waived for convenience?

With the end of the cold war, it seems that East-West conflict will be replaced by North-South conflict. The new problems haunting us will be instability arising from ethnic and religious turmoil, disintegration of states, a massive flow of arms and military technology, poverty, economic and ecological disasters, competition for scarce vital resources and large movements of people across national borders. The fault line will be drawn between rieh and poor nations. It will, to a large extent, coiocide with racial and ethnic divisions.

Nowhere is the sum of these problems epitomised more vividly than in the massive influx of migrants into industrialised western nations. It demonstrates that the world is indeed a shrinking global village and that it is difficult to draw an effective *cordon sanitaire* to insulate one country from the problems of another.

The rhetoric of the 1970s and '80s argued that growth in the North and the South could not continue at such an uneven pace without creating a serious disequilibrium in the international system. Today the theory proves itself not in aid and trade flows hut in the impoverished masses crossing borders in search of a better life. The domestic problems of one country are exported to another while ecological disturbances in one continent have ripple effects on distant shores.

This is only the beginning of the challenge and the start of the pressure.

If demographic projections are believed, tbe population explosion is far from over. Much of it will occur in the developing world. The ratios of population between the countries of the North and South are likely to alter drastically. So will population flows as poor migrants seek greener pastures.

The ethnie mix within industrialised western societies in North America and Europe will thus change radically. How will the traditional liberal society deal with the politics of ethnic and racial heterogeneity?

For Europeans, one option clearly will be to huild a Fortress Europe. The United States, given its tradition as an immigrant nation, will find it hard to recant its founding philosophy. While official policy may remain sane and rational, politicians may well face popular pressure to raise entry barriers.

It may be no coincidence that at a time of recession and economie stagnation in industrialised nations, racism has resurfaced unabashedly. It appears that even liberal societies find it hard to accommodate large numbers of outsiders who are ethnically and culturally different, especially in tight economic times. But ethnicity is more than just situational; it is also primordial.

The way to handle the problem is not to let the situation develop where the primordial becomes salient. This will require skillful accommodation, acculturation and assimilation strategies.

It is ironic that at a time when western states are campaigning for democracy and human rights worldwide, anti-liberal reflexes are popping up, and gainiog adherents, at home. Ethnic intolerance and racism should never be allowed to gain legitimacy. We are not just talking about Bosnia. We are talking about the daily treatment of people different from ourselves.

The writer, director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Siogapore and the Singapore Iotemational Foundation, is a former Singapore ambassador to the United Nations. This article is reprinted from the Herald Tribune.

Poverty and political Islam threaten Mubarak

By Paul Eedle
Reuter

CAIRO — Muslim militant violence is the most obvious threat to the government of Egypt, the pillar of western policy io the Middle East. But it may not be the most dangerous.

Western government analysts believe the real risks are longer-term: that President Hosni Moharak will not make the economy grow fast enough and will fail to contain peaceful Muslim fundamentalist opposition to his rule.

Mr. Mubarak is proud of beating off demands hy the World Bank to speed up free-market economie reform and is determined to resist calls for greater democracy until the worst economic problems are solved. His biggest fear is chaos.

But development experts say it will take at least another five years before free-market reforms make the economy grow faster than a population booming at 2.3 per cent a year.

That means five years before Egypt's mass of slum dwellers and peasants feel any richer.

Meanwhile, frustration at the impossibility of peaceful political change is boiling among everyone from the violent militants to secular liberals. By far the best organised and most widely supported oppositioo group are the fundamentalists, a powerful force in Egyptian society fot 60 years.

"Islamic trend" supporters dominate unions of doctors, lawyers and engineers. They run schools and clinics that put governmeot services to shame with low prices and high quality.

They express the anger of every social class at the West's new world order, which punishes Iraq and intervenes in Somalia hut allows Muslims to be slaughtered in Bosnia.

"We do not see the extremist violence as a threat to the regime," one western analyst said recently.

"My own view is that the real challenge for Mubarak over the next five to 10 years is going to be coping with the challenge from mainstream fundamentalists and the challeoge posed by the country's economic problems."

In the short term, Mr. Mubarak reigns supreme.

Parliament is due to nominate him unopposed on Wednesday for a third six-year term in office. Under the constitution, it nominates a single candidate to put to the people in a referendum, which is due to be held in early Octoher.

The constitution and emergency laws in force since Muslim militants assassinated Mr. Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar Sadat, in 1981 give the president enormous executive power.

Political parties have been allowed since 1977. But the president's National Democratic Party (NDP), descendant of the single party set up after army officers overthrew the monarchy io 1952, wins overwhelming majorities in every election.

The militant violence is not trivial. More than 160 people have died in 18 months, including militants, police, Christians and three foreigners. Attacks on tour huses and Nile cruisers have wrecked the tourist industry.

Mr. Mubarak has used fast-acting military courts to try scores of suspects and 14 men have been hanged — the largest number of people executed for political crimes in Egypt this century.

But western analysts say Mr. Mubarak's police and intelligence services, although often brutal and inefficient, can almost certainly cootrol the militants, whose violence has disgusted many Egyptians.

The only group able to order change in the short term is the armed forces, the ultimate source of power to Egypt since the 1952 revolutioo. But they appear completely loyal to Mr. Mubarak, a former commander of the air force.

"The system still rests on an officers' class, whether in uniform or out of uniform," a western security consultant said. "They have everything to lose if the system were to go down."

The consensus is for no radical change any time soon.

"Muddling through — I thiok that is by far the largest probability," one diplomat said. "I give that more than 50 per ceot."

Muddling through, however, may not be enough.

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Population control programmes to get priority at Asian Development Bank

MANILA (AP) — Populatioo control has become so crucial to Third World development that the Asian Development Bank will give priority to funding programmes to curb growth rates, the hank's senior economist said Tnesday.

Satish Jha told a populatioo symposiom that development programmes have tradiodnally focused on fighting poverty, protecting the environment and promoting sustainable economic growth.

"There is a general realisation that all of these objectives cannot be realised unless there is an attack on the issue of population," Mr. Jha told the symposium, sponsored hy the bank.

He said the hank, which funds development programmes in Asia, would now fioance programmes specifically tailored to population control. In tbe past, population control and family planning projects had to be included in hroader programmes in order to get Asian Development Bank financing.

Mr. Jha said donor countries have expressed concern that as long as Third World birth rates remain bigh, other programmes to improve their economies and livelihood will fail.

"So in order to have a sustainable economic growth, you must have quite a bit of balance between populaoon and the development facilides you are developing," he said.

Mr. Jha said his multinational organisation bas already approved funding for a population projeet in Papua New Guinea and is considering proposals from Pakistan, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Ernesto Pernia, a senior bank ecooomist, said the population issue used to be very controversial "bnt now sensiovity has greatly waned."

He said the hank was interested in making contraceptives available to as many people as possible.

Ho said the development bank would likely support projects in India and Philippines which initially bad good population strategies hut ran into prohlems for political reasons.

Opposition to population control grew in India after the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi initiated a strict programme with draconian practiees soeh as forced sterilisation.

In the Philippines, the influential Roman Catholic church has denounced the programme for allegedly undermining the role of the family.

OPEC chief seeks Gulf help to rescue oil prices

ABU DHABI (AFP) — OPEC Presideot Jean Ping of Gabon will tour Gulf oil heavyweights this week to seek their help to rescue oil prices that have plunged to their lowest level in nearly three years.

Mr. Ping will visit Saudi Arabia, Iran, Knwait and the United Arab Emirates, which produce nearly two thirds of the output of the 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Gulf oil sources said Mr. Ping, who starts his tour Wednesday, would likely ask the four key OPEC members to stick to their quotas and might even propose temporary cuts to sbore up prices.

"I expect Ping's mission to produce positive results because he has good links with all Gulf states," one source said. "I think he will ask them to adhere to their quotas and see if they can offer any production cuts."

His trip comes ahead of the group's July 28 talks in Vienna, called after oil prices fell under $16 for the first time since the end of the Gulf war oo expectations the United Nations will ease an embargo oo Iraqi oil exports. They later rallied on reports of the planned OPEC meeting.

The expectations were strengthened by reports of an agreement between the United Nations and Iraq on monitoring of its weapons programme. U.N. envoy Rolf Ekeus said he thought this would make it easier to reach a deal on oil exports.

The United Nations and Iraq bave been locked in negotiations in New York on a deal that will enable Iraq to export $1.6 billion worth of oil to huy food and medicine. The talks were suspeoded last week after the Iraqi negotiators said they wanted to consult their government.

The two sides bave yet to agree on the terms of supply but the deal means Iraq will export between 500,000 and 600,000 barrels per day (b/d) for a period of nearly six mooths. This will add pressure on the market, which is already awash with nearly 800,000 b/d in excess OPEC supply.

But oil sources said they believed Iraq would not be able to begin exports before September as it has to prepare its export terminal facilities.

"At their talks next week, OPEC ministers will likely assure the market that Iraq will not start exports before September. At that time, demand begins to improve for the last quarter and the market conld then absorb the Iraqi output," a Gulf Arab oil source said.

The sources said Mr. Ping wonld also seek restraint by Knwait, which said it would gradually raise crude production to more than two million b/d from July 1 after OPEC refused its demand to give it an increase of 30 per cent over its output quota of 1.6 million b/d.

"I do not think Ping will ask Kuwait to return to 1.6 million but he might try to persuade it not to increase production to two million," a source said. "I think market improvement hinges largely on Kowait and other Gulf states."

But the sources said any agreement at next week's talks remains tentative as there is growing speculation Iraq might be allowed to export more oil.

According to the Nicosia-based Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali had told Iraq it could expect a significant increase in oil exports after the first six months if it accepted U.N. terms on the deal under discussion.

"The United Nations is now a keyplayer in dictating the level of OPEC supply since, de facto and de jure, it alone will determine Iraq's export volume," MEES said.

China cracks down on government spending

PEKING (AFP) — China announced Tuesday a 20 per cent cut in government administrative spending and restricted purchases of imported luxury goods until year's end, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The decision, part of a government package to cool the economy, was prompted by a shortage of capital triggered by government overspending in the Jannary-June period, Fioance Minister Liu Zhongli said.

State revenne increased 3.5 per cent in the first half to 164.5 billion yuan ($28.6 billion), while expenditure surged 12.5 per cent to 161.9 billion yuan, Mr. Liu told a natiooal fioance conference that opeoed Tuesday.

The ministry will halt approving purchases of cars or mobile phones hy administrative organs or deht-ridden eoterprises, Mr. Liu said at the meeting, which called all provincial finance leaders to Peking.

Stricter cootrols would also be introduced for purchases of eight consumer goods, including air conditioners and photographic equipment.

Meanwhile, local authorities would be forced to cut expenditures on meetings by 20 per cent.

The crackdown on government spending was part of a 16-point plan adopted by Peking earlier this month to cool overheated investmeot and hring dowo donhle-digit inflation.

China's economy grew a record 13.9 per cent in the first half of this year and inflation in major cities has running at more than 17 per cent, figures released Monday showed.

The ceotral government has already laid down tough new restrictions on the banking and real estate sectors and warned provincial leaders to fall io line or face immediate dismissal.

Arab airlines join computer booking system

CAIRO (R) — Eleven Arab airlines set up a joint venture Monday to subscribe to a computerised reservation system which could generate up to $160 million in profits over 10 years, officials said.

The airlines, members of the Arab Air Carriers Organisation (AACO), formed a Dubai-based company called Araby Company for Antomatie Booking to subscribe to Galileo International, with 400 members worldwide.

"We signed a 10-year contract with Galileo International to subscribe to their automatie booking system," AACO Secretary General Adli Dajani told Reuters.

He expected profits to reach $160 million over the 10-year project, projected to be used by 150 Arab travel agencies by the end of next month and 900 by July 1994.

The eleveo airlines — mostly national carriers — serve some 22 million people annually, said Abdul Wahab Teffaha, the AACO's assistant secretary general.

U.S. panel recommends airline tax breaks

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. airlines should get tax hreaks to huild their strengths, according to a draft report released Monday of an emergeocy commission formed to revitalise the industry.

U.S. airlines have lost $10 billion over the past three years — more than the total earned in the history of U.S. aviation.

The 15-member panel, formally titled the Commission to Ensure a Strong Competitive Airline Industry, was formed in the spring to find ways to strengthen the airline industry. Five members were appointed by President Bill Clinton, five hy the Senate and five hy the House of Representatives.

Final recommendatioos are to be given to Mr. Clintoo oo Aug. 20.

The draft recommendatioo to exempt the airline industry from new taxes proposed to reduce the hudget deficit is likely to run into stroog opposition from the Clinton administration.

Laura Tyson, chairman of Mr. Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers and a member of the airline commission, said Monday any tax action the panel takes would have to be revenue oeutral, and the commissioo's recommendations contained oo provisions for recouping lost revenue.

Hilton Hotels sees profits down 17 per cent

BEVERLY HILLS, California (AFP) — Profits for Hilton Hotels fell 17 per cent in the second quarter because of higher interest rates paid to fund expansion and improvement projects, the corporation has said.

Hilton earned $26.8 millioo (56 cents per share) in the second qnarter, from April to June. That was down from $32.4 million (68 cents per share) for the same quarter in 1992.

"This was a most difficult quarter io that our gaming operations were unable to offset sluggish hotel results as they had in recent periods," said company chairman Barron Hilton.

Gamhling revenues slipped from $37.5 million to $37.4 million while a glut of hotel rooms kept earnings at $29.7 million, the same as the second quarter of last year, the company said.

Hilton blamed the lower earnings on higher interest rates paid for development projects.

Sri Lanka launches investment and export drive in Gulf states

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Sri Lanka bas launched a drive to attract investment from wealthy Gulf Arab states and boost exports to their lucrative markets, a Sri Lankan diplomat said Monday.

The South Asian country, taking advantage of a business upturn in the regioo, will open a consulate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) port of Dnbai this year and stage its first Gulf exhibitioo.

"The main objective of the consulate is to boost trade with the UAE and other Gulf states. We have various prodocts to offer to the countries of this region," said Dayaratana Silva, first secretary at the Sri Lankan embassy here.

Mr. Silva, who will be in charge of commercial affairs at the consulate, said it would open in a few weeks and the fair would be held in November with participants from some 45 companies.

Sri Lankan officials expect a large increase in exports to the region, since Duhai is a major Gulf reexport centre, serving Iran and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and tho UAE.

"O target is not ouly the UAE at the whole Gulf region," Mr. Silva told AFP. "We have charted an actioo plan for this purpose."

Sri Lanka's main exports to the GCC are tea, garments, fruits, vegetables, spices and light industrial products. Its imports from the region include oil and aluminium.

The UAE is Sri Lanka's main economie partner in the Gulf, with their two-way trade standing at about $44 million in 1992, down from $65 million in 1991.

Business upturn woos back Gulf investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A business npturn is hringing hack domestic funds that were transferred ont of the Gulf region after Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, officials and bankers bave said.

Around $23 billion in government and private funds were forced ont of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the first two months after the 1990 invasion and the sum that has returned is higher.

Bankers said Saudi Arabia, which suffered most from the fund drainage, restrieved about $25 billion, which were reflected in a sharp growth in its bank deposits as well as in construction and stocks. Another $2 billion returned to the United Arah Emirates (UAE).

"Economic departments in the GCC have confirmed the return of a large part of Gulf funds due to a surge in business and profits by banks and companies," the official Emirates News Agency WAM has said.

The Saudi Arabian Mooetary Agency (SAMA) recently said deposits with its 12 commercial banks had steadily increased since the end of the war in Fehruary 1991 due to renewed confidence in the economy.

After a loss of around $1 billion, deposits jumped by 19.2 per cent to $45.6 billion the end of 1991 and by 3.6 per cent to $47.3 billioo at the end of 1992, SAMA said. Deposits rose by 5.3 per cent to $49.8 hillioo at the end of March.

In the UAE, bank deposits increased by nearly 3.4 per cent to $20.1 hillion at the end of 1992 from $19.4 billioo.

Banks in Saodi Arabia, the UAE and other GCC members — Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar — also reported record profits.

Saudi banks said profits soared by 73 per cent to $978 millioo in 1992 from $565 million io 1991. Profits of the largest 17 banks in the UAE peaked at $259 million.

Bankers attributed the high profits to a decline in interest rates oo deposits and a shaky business upswing in the region, mainly due to higher government spending, which constitutes the main factor in Gulf economies.

They said they expected the boom to continue in 1993 as GCC states approved eveo higher budgets and projected an increase in revenues to $67 billion from $59 billion in 1992.

Saudi Arabia announced the biggest budget increase, with spending projected at $52.5 billion in 1993 compared with $48 billioo in 1992. Officials said this would further stimulate the economy, which is still heavily dependent on oil.

A study by the Dammam-based Federation of the GCC Chambers of Commerce and Industry said it expected the return of more funds to the Middle East as Gulf states seek to provide incentives to investors and other Arah countries press ahead with reforms to attract capital.

But a recent report hy the Kuwaiti-based Arah Corporation for Investment Guarantees said domestic investments of around $25 billion remained a fraction of overseas Arah funds of more than $670 billion.

"For each dollar invested in the Arah regioo, $25 invested abroad," it said.

Bahrain reports growth in banking sector

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Bahrain has reported growth in its hanking sector in 1992, a trend attrihuted to a return of confidence after the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

Assets of the Gulf island's 19 commercial banks increased hy 2.9 per cent to 2.66 hillion Bahraini dinars ($7.18 billioo) at the end of 1992, from 2.58 billion dioars ($6.96 hillion) at the end of 1991, the Bahraini Mooetary Agency (BMA) has said.

It said assets of offshore banks reached their pre-war level, jumpiog by 30.7 per cent to $69.8 billion from $53.4 billion.

Liquidity grew hy 4.1 per cent to 1.16 billion dinars ($3.1 billion from 1.12 billion dinars ($3 billion).

"The increase reflects the return of confidence to the economy and the hanking sector in the region after the Gulf war" of January-February 1991, a banker said. "Reports show large funds invested abroad are returning home."

Around $23 hillion in government and private funds were transferred out of the Gulf in the first two months after the August 1990 Iraqi invasioo of Kuwait hut more than that sum has since returned, according to bankers.

Bahrain, the Gulf's financial centre, is the only country in the region to have offshore banks bnt the United Arah Emirates has said it would also allow such units.

According to the Gulf Daily News, the BMA will start requiring locally incorporated banks quoted on the Bahrain Stock Exchange to issue audited financial statements every quarter.

The BMA, the island natioo's central bank, will make the requirement effective from the start of 1994, in a move to keep investors better informed about the banks' financial position.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY JULY 21, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: While you may find it necessary to remain within your home or office today, utilize this time to go over reports, insurance concerns and property matters to better your present position.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Use the day to put into motion action required to gain the wishes of a personal nature that mean the most to you, tonight consider public matters.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Spend the daytime at whatever your outside activities happen to be and you can be successful with them, while later having a pleasant time with a recent acquaintance.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Whatever you have in mind that requires a fresh new approach is now your cup of tea so drain it to the dregs and make potential headway for success.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You really can make conditions much more exciting for your attachment if you have a change of pace and bring new life into relationship.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get involved in some public project that has very up to date conditions associated with it and you gain much forward progress with general public.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Put your best foot forward in whatever activities you have to engage in today and let others see you know what you are talking about, tonight protect your vitality.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Consider the different recreations that have come to your attention and try out the most unusual one that appeals to your sense of fun and humor.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Carry through with the thoughts you had yesterday for making your home more a haven happiness and you find your family will go along with you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is the day to delve into up to date sources of information to locate the advanced means by which you will be able to attend to daily interests.

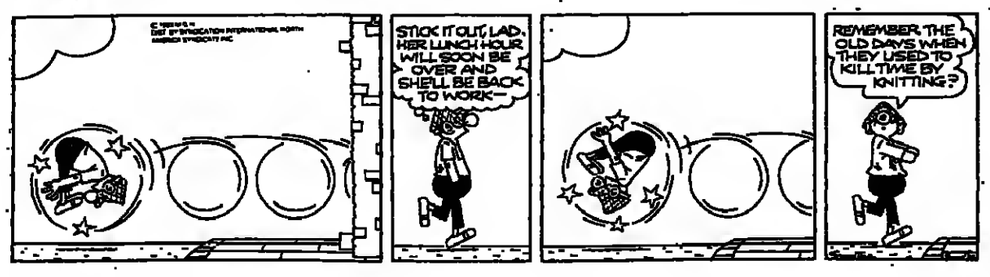
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Seek new ways to handle financial and other practical interests for by so doing you can increase your prosperity in the material world.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are blessed with an innate awareness of what to do to be a big success during this current Aquarian age and this is the day to do just that.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get together with a modern minded confidendal advisor and find out what you can do to make your present dreams come true in this dramatic age.

Peanuts

Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"Got something that smells sweaty like Sylvester Stallone, but not sweaty like a construction worker?"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GLITH

LONBE

GRIFIN

VONCLE

SHE GOT BEHIND IN HER WORK BECAUSE OF THIS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: HER

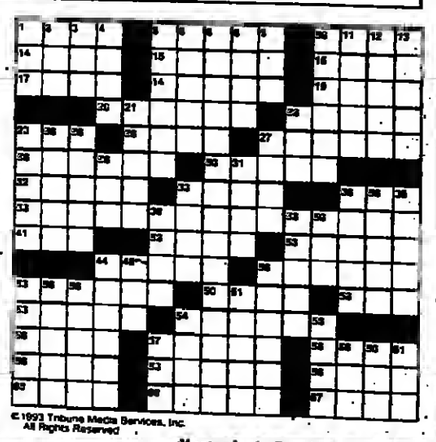
(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: RUSTY IDIOT PUNDIT BOTHER

Answer: What the motorcycle cop considered his job— A "PURSUIT"

THE Daily Crossword

by Samuel K. Fliegner



ACROSS
1 Salad fish
5 Friend of Pythias
10 Dimorsaula
14 Birthright seller
15 Dishonor
16 Josip Broz
17 Something owed
18 Sweat wine
19 Aware of
20 Dickensian musical
22 "Tyrolean call
23 Health resort
25 Currier's partner
27 Omen
28 Benevolent
30 Pepe's brother
32 Ascend
33 Bridge
34 Narrow inlet
37 Suspends
41 Kind of man
42 "— Eyre"
43 Shelley's Muse
44 Orchestrate
46 — Roberts"
47 Two-edged sword
50 Complacent
52 Exist
53 Papal cape
54 Forge
56 Days gone by
57 Assigned chore
58 Charity
62 Idi —
63 Pound part
64 "The Caine Mutiny" author
65 "The — of the Mohicans"
66 Stand or cover lead-in
67 Wife of a knight

DOWN
1 Koppel
2 Manipulate
3 Collar
4 — de le
5 Case in grammar
6 — and beyond
7 Decides
8 Glacial ridges
9 Napoleon's marshal
10 Moe, e.g.
11 Religion of India
12 Water mammal
13 Like sheep: var.
21 Actor's script
22 Brynner
23 Unsteady
24 Thick soup
25 Pierre's girlfriends
27 Teen problem
29 Viper
31 Scruff
33 Unexpected difficulty
34 Gaucho's rope
35 — alla
36 Worship
38 Partly open
39 Dobbin's sound
40 "— Miniver"
44 Butler or partner
45 Golfer's need
46 Grumble
47 Part of HRH
48 Aroma
49 City of Light
51 Pie filling
54 Shock
55 Ketch
57 Old Fr. coin
59 Mauna —
60 Guard or lark
61 Pie in the —

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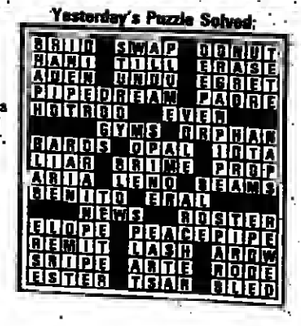
Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 663172 / 663177
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 20/07/1993

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	172,180	179.500	181.000	179.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	13,268	6.780	6.880	6.780
BANK OF JORDAN	14,675	5.200	5.120	5.180
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK.	11,296	2.100	2.110	2.110
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	22,356	4.850	4.960	4.860
THE HOUSING BANK	37,453	5.000	6.000	5.910
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	185,937	3.360	3.330	3.340
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	5,947	4.450	4.370	4.440
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	18,703	5.600	5.650	5.660
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	18,350	4.950	4.900	4.850
BUSINESS BANK	198,679	5.180	5.300	5.200
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	97,539	2.110	2.120	2.100
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	932	4.050	4.060	4.060
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	26,560	3.020	3.030	3.020
JORDAN INSURANCE	4,300	4.400	4.300	4.300
MIDDLE EAST INSURANCE	13,406	3.250	3.350	3.250
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	5,025	3.350	3.350	3.350
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	16,054	3.800	3.830	3.900
UNIVERSAL INSURANCE	6,514	1.890	1.810	1.800
HOLY LAND INSURANCE	1,788	3.150	3.250	3.250
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	1,163	3.200	3.150	3.150
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	1,050	3.650	3.500	3.500
AL-WISR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	725	4.500	4.700	4.700
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	34,256	2.660	2.670	2.650
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	5,425	7.550	7.750	7.750
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	12,387	5.400	5.350	5.220
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	30,653	4.530	4.550	4.530
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	37,492	1.940	1.940	1.860
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1,580	0.790	0.780	0.790
PETRA ENTERPRISES & EQUIPMENTS LEASING	7,377	1.130	1.120	1.130
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1,633	0.810	1.910	1.910
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	2,360	1.290	1.180	1.180
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRA'I	33,163	16.500	17.000	16.950
JORDAN PRESS & PUBLISHING /AD-DUSTOUR	5,250	9.950	9.980	9.500
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	16,559	3.410	2.390	2.360
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	15,588	2.710	2.700	2.690
ATTAHDEEF CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	11,274	2.360	2.410	2.380
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	448,358	3.020	3.010	3.000
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	4,410	4.150	4.200	4.200
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	35,892	11.500	11.450	11.440
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	10,386	8.450	8.300	8.310
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	287,149	9.900	10.000	9.870
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	39,199	7.750	7.650	7.800
JORDAN DAIRY	30,370	2.450	2.440	2.420
JORDAN PRINTING & PACKING	6,270	6.200	6.700	5.700
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	32,691	4.180	4.190	4.110
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	25,147	4.650	4.550	4.550
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENTS INDUSTRIES	106,060	21.000	21.200	21.200
SPINNING & WEAVING	8,842	3.060	3.050	3.000
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	3,150	3.250	3.150	3.150
JORDAN GLASS INDUSTRIES	8,374	0.590	0.580	0.590
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	147,734	21.350	21.500	21.550
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	56,898	3.130	3.140	3.150
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	46,183	10.450	10.500	10.450
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	2,753	2.180	2.170	2.170
JORDAN MEDICAL CORPORATION	8,125	9.430	9.420	9.430
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	1,265	0.790	0.770	0.790
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	47,745	4.252	4.250	4.210
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	7,181	6.350	6.510	6.510
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	5,832	7.920	7.920	7.910
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	14,761	8.850	8.900	8.800
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	11,548	1.240	1.240	1.240
JORDAN PRECAST CONCRETE INDUSTRY	2,955	0.540	0.530	0.540
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	274,401	10.420	10.420	10.460
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	6,188	4.420	4.420	4.420
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	58,749	4.172	4.200	4.190
JORDAN KUWAIT CO. FOR AGRI. & FOOD PROD.	31,169	1.900	1.900	1.880
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	1,860	3.100	3.100	3.100
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	68,686	5.650	5.650	5.610
GRAND TOTAL	2,929,565			

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 123969
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET : JD 235852

Officials warn of catastrophic results to Sudan reform programme

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudanese officials are warning the government that its economic reform programme has triggered price hikes which could have "catastrophic results" if left unchecked.

Prices have doubled once again in the past two months, and government salary increases do not catch up with the hikes.

For example, a piece of Arab bread now costs five Sudanese pounds (about three cents). And the basic salary is around 2,000 pounds ($13) monthly. If six members in a family each eat two pieces of bread daily, more than 90 per cent of the salary is spent on bread alone.

"There is instability in prices, which if not rectified urgently, will lead to catastrophic results," former finance minister Badr El Deen Suliman told a daily newspaper. Mr. Suliman chairs parliament's economic affairs committee which is preparing a report to present to the military government of Lieutenant General Omar Hassan El Bashir.

Sudan is Africa's largest country and one of the poorest in the world. At least three times this century, bloodless civilian uprisings prompted by deteriorating economic and political conditions have toppled the government.

Lieutenant General El Bashir overthrew a democratically elected but largely inefficient civilian government in 1989. He is carrying out an economic reform policy, including decreasing subsidies, limiting imports, selling the public sector and devaluing the Sudanese pound, but these conditions have raised inflation.

Last year, inflation was 149 per cent, but in March, the government said it had decreased to 80.6 per cent.

The black market rate of 250 pounds to the dollar is much higher than the official rate of 150 pounds to the dollar.

The walis, or governors, of Sudan's nine regions have said in a statement to the government that although they supported the economic liberalisation policy, something urgent had to be done to stop the "price chaos."

They have also urged the government to fix the price of bread until the end of the current fiscal year in June 1994.

Economic Minister Abdul Raheem Hamdi acknowledges that the economic reform policy is to blame for the spiraling prices. However, he also blamed ongoing development programmes, subsidies, salary increases and the 10-year-old civil war in the south for the situation.

The Sudanese government is perpetually short of foreign currency, especially since the 1990 Gulf war in which Sudan supported Iraq. Sudan became politically isolated, and annual Western and Arab economic aid dropped from $800 million to $100 million.

In 1986, the International Monetary Fund (IMF's) declared Sudan ineligible for loans for its failure to pay $220 million in arrears to the institution.

The present economic reform programme is an attempt to meet the IMF's conditions to restore Sudan's economic credibility. Sudan has also stopped paying back a foreign debt of $13 billion after the military regime announced it had been concurred by past governments and was not the responsibility of the present one.

Housing construction in Jordan booms

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The housing needs of the more than 300,000 Jordanian expatriates who have returned home pushed up construction activities by almost threefold during 1992 compared with 1989, official statistics show.

The authorities issued 21,191 permits for buildings — covering a total area of 6,496,000 square metres — during the year compared with 9,581 permits and 2,425,000 square metres during 1989, according to figures given by the Jordan Engineers Association and cited in the latest statistic bulletin of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

More than half of the permits — 12,180 — were issued for solely residential buildings in Amman covering an area of 5,120,000 square metres, the bulletin showed.

This compares with 8,803 permits and 3,091,000 square metres in 1991, 6,050 permits and 1,751,000 square metres in 1990 and 5,261 permits and 1,589,000 square metres in 1989.

Irbid came next with 5,278 permits and 717,900 square metres, followed by Zarqa with 1,356 permits and 264,000 square metres and other areas (combined) accounting for 355,400 square metres during 1992.

Only 11 permits accounting for 37,500 square metres of buildings for residential as well as other purposes were issued during the year. Again, seven of the permits covering 36,500 square metres were issued for buildings in Amman area.

The boom in construction, cited by economists as one of the main short-term factors indicating growth in the economy, is continuing. The authorities issued 2,839 permits covering 621,200 square metres were issued during the first three months of 1993 (a relaovely lean period of the year).

According to a 1992 government study, Jordan needed 55,000 housing units to accommodate the expatriates and their families who came home in the wake of the Gulf crisis triggered by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Construction industry experts said the buildings already constructed or being built under the licences issued until the end of 1992 could account for around 40 to 45 per cent of the needs estimated by the government study.

There was no clear indication how much money was invested in construction. An indirect indication of the boom was also evident in the annual figures of imports for the year. According to these figures, iron and steel imports jumped to JD 133.58 million during 1992, compared with JD 84 million in 1991, JD 70 million in 1990 and JD 54 million in 1989.

Local industrial production in the construction sector (using part of the import input) was given as: 2,746,000 tonnes of cement, 234,700 tonnes of iron and 147,000 tonnes of metallic pipes. No figures were available for other inputs into the construction sector.

The total amount of tax collected, including property-sale tax, during the year was JD 101 million. No split up was available to indicate what percentage of this amount was in property-sale tax.

The CBJ bulletin, citing Ministry of Labour statistics, said 54,000 Jordanians were employed in the construction sector. The figure does not include expatriate labour.

Kuwait says it has sold all its oil

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, expected to come under pressure to curb oil production at emergency OPEC talks later this month, said Tuesday it has sold all the crude oil it plans to produce in three months from July.

"We are sold out from July to September... everything we plan to produce is committed," Hussein Al Shamma, executive assistant managing director, marketing and sales, of Kuwait Petroleum Corp. (KPC) told Reuters.

He made the comment in response to questions about Kuwait's ability to meet possible demands from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at a meeting expected in Vienna on July 28 that members cut production to help support prices if Iraq resumes oil exports.

Although Mr. Shamma said he could not comment on Kuwait's policies on OPEC or on oil production, he said that as far as the marketing aspect was concerned oil due to come out of the ground from July to September has already been sold.

Kuwait plans gradually to increase production to 1.9 million barrels per day (b/d) at some time during July after rejecting an OPEC quota of 1.6 million b/d that had applied till June.

Kuwait plans to raise output further to 2.0 million b/d some time in August and to 2.16 million some time during September.

"People here at KPC marketing have done their work," Mr. Shamma said of their success in selling the extra oil available.

Kuwait announced the increases last month after opting out of the OPEC quota system, complaining that its rightful quota should be 2.16 million b/d.

Kuwait argues it is a special case because it is still repairing its oilfields from damage inflicted during Iraq's seven-month occupation and the 1991 Gulf war that ended it.

OPEC members are to meet on July 28 to discuss how to respond to plans for a limited sale of Iraqi oil worth $1.6 billion being discussed by Iraq and the United Nations.

Algerian Energy Minister Hacen Mefti said an emergency OPEC meeting would try to bring Kuwait into a new oil output accord pending Iraq's return to the market.

"Consultations are going on for a special meeting to prepare... an organised return of Iraq to the market on the one hand, and to reconsider Kuwait's integration in a new accord if possible on the other hand," he told the newspaper El Watan.

In the interview published Tuesday, Mr. Mefti said some member states of OPEC were violating production quotas agreed last month, contributing to a fall in oil prices.

"Among the main causes (of the fall in prices) is of course over production by certain (OPEC) memehrs which peak at 800,000 barrels a day," Mr. Mefti said without naming the states.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 19/7/93	Tokyo Close Date 20/7/93
Sterling Pound	1.4988	1.4988
Deutsche Mark	1.7078	1.7060
Swiss Franc	1.5010	1.5015
French Franc	5.8200	5.8225**
Japanese Yen	108.48	108.43
European Currency Unit	1.1400	1.1403**

USD Per STG
European Opening or 8:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 20/7/1993

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.00	3.12	3.31	3.56
Sterling Pound	5.81	5.94	5.80	5.81
Deutsche Mark	7.12	7.00	6.68	6.25
Swiss Franc	4.56	4.56	4.43	4.31
French Franc	7.50	7.25	6.81	6.25
Japanese Yen	3.18	3.18	3.09	3.12
European Currency Unit	8.00	7.68	7.19	6.62

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 20/7/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6950	0.6970
Sterling Pound	1.0416	1.0468
Deutsche Mark	0.4071	0.4091
Swiss Franc	0.4630	0.4653
French Franc	0.1194	0.1200
Japanese Yen*	0.6408	0.6440
Dutch Guilder	0.3619	0.3637
Swedish Krona	0.0879	0.0883
Italian Lira*	0.0440	0.0442
Belgian Franc	0.01972	0.01982

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 20/7/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8180	1.8380
Lebanese Lira*	0.038875	0.040750
Saudi Riyal	0.1848	0.1855
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2200	2.2900
Qatari Riyal	0.1880	0.1920
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2300
Omani Riyal	1.7650	1.8200
UAE Dirham	0.1880	0.1920
Greek Drachma*	0.2983	0.3285
Cypriot Pound	1.3485	1.3885

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. $1.00 costs	1.2795/05	Canadian dollar
	1.7045/55	Deutschemarks
	1.9200/10	Dutch guilders
	1.4970/80	Swiss francs
	35.22/23	Belgian francs
	5.8185/35	French francs
	1585.0/7.0	Italian lire
	108.10/20	Japanese yen
	7.9210/10	Swedish crowns
	7.2700/00	Norwegian crowns
	6.5800/00	Danish crowns
One sterling	$1.5040/50	
One ounce of gold	$391.35/391.85	

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Bosnian Serb forces press attack on Sarajevo mountain

SARAJEVO (R) — The night sky over Sarajevo was lit with the flashes of heavy weapons as fighting raged Tuesday between besieging Serb forces and Muslim units on a mountain overlooking the Bosnian capital.

The constant thud of heavy artillery in the battle for Mount Igman, a Muslim army stronghold southwest of Sarajevo, could be heard from the city only a few miles away.

Sarajevo Radio said the Serbs were mounting armoured and infantry attacks and pounding the mountain with long-range artillery.

The Muslim-controlled radio said Bosnian government forces were holding the line.

The Belgrade based Tanjug News Agency quoted the Serb command as saying its forces had Monday captured the southwest half of the mountain. This could not be independently confirmed.

United Nations military observers have not yet been able to give a detailed assessment of the latest fighting but U.N. relief workers say more than 3,000 Muslim refugees huddled at the foot of Mount Igman may be forced to flee.

U.N. Protection Force spokesman Major Luuk Niessen said the Serbs were attacking the mountain from the northwest and southeast.

Unconfirmed intelligence from the battle zone indicated, however, that Serb gains during the day were being retaken by Muslim-led Bosnian forces during the night.

"So we don't know exactly where the confrontation lines are at the moment," Mr. Niessen told reporters.

Niessen said fighting between Croats and Muslims — once allied against the Serbs — broke out in the central Bosnian town of Gornji Vakuf after days of relative calm.

The British military headquarters building in the town was hit by several mortar rounds but was not seriously damaged.

Pitched Croat-Muslim artillery and Mortar battles engulfed Bugojno, 20 kilometres north of Gornji Vakuf and on the same major relief supply route from the Adriatic.

Fojnica, about 40 kilometres west of Sarajevo and reported captured by the Bosnian army from Croat forces Friday, was reported very tense with part of the town a no man's land only narrowly separating the combatants.

UNICEF spokesman Ryan Grist said a mental institution where 230 children were found abandoned without food and water at the weekend was in the no man's land. Security guarantees were needed before normal care could be restored there.

Small arms fire erupted in the vicinity of the building after darkness fell Monday night, Mr. Grist said.

In the southern city of Mostar, there was further evidence of ethnic cleansing by Croats.

Reuter journalists saw hundreds of men believed to be Muslims taken under Croat military police escort to Mostar Monday where they headed down a road to the city's heliodrome, used as an internment camp for Muslims in the past.

The journalists had followed the pale, emaciated men — most in civilian clothes — in five trucks and a bus for miles through the countryside from just outside the Croat stronghold of Capljina in southwestern Bosnia.

In Sarajevo, Bosnia's collective presidency indicated it was ready to attend Geneva peace talks, after agreeing on a joint position and delegation, but had doubts over whether it should go if Serb forces keep up their attacks.

Bosnian radio reported late Monday that the 10-man presidency had met and agreed a common position and the make-up of a delegation to peace talks.

The policy and membership of the mission would be announced later.

But the radio said presidency members had expressed doubts about whether there was any point in attending talks so long as rebel Serbs continued offensives whose main thrust is directed against Mount Igman.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department said Monday the International Aid Fund for the former Yugoslavia is running $263 million short of what will be urgently needed over the next several months.

Even though international donor nations pledged an additional $170 million last week, and the United States alone has donated $95 million since May, Department spokesman Mike McCurry said this will not be enough.

"They anticipate now that over the next several months the shortfall could amount to as much as $263 million in additional funding for assistance that would be necessary to handle the urgent needs," Mr. McCurry told reporters.

A man crawls out of his flooded merchandise business in Saint Louis, Missouri, after checking the damage inside (AFP photo)

Bridge reopens on Mississippi River

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Road crews reopened a bridge on the Mississippi River, providing the only way across for 200 miles (320 kilometres). Des Moines still had no running water Tuesday because people opened the faucets too soon.

For much of the American midwest the weather was clear and sunny Monday. River levels began dropping below flood stage in Minnesota and Wisconsin. And in St. Louis, the Mississippi apparently crested Sunday night and was dropping off.

But the all-clear hasn't been sounded just yet.

"The good news is that the river has crested," said Tom Dietrich, a National Weather Service hydrologist in St. Louis, where the river reached 46.9 feet (14.3 metres) by Monday night. "People feel a sense of relief, maybe they can get through this without any more damage.

"The bad news is that it's going to stay high for quite awhile," he added. "There's still a lot of water coming down the upper Mississippi."

A 480-mile (772-kilometres) stretch of the Mississippi from Dubuque, Iowa, to the mouth of the Ohio River is still above flood stage. River towns below St. Louis are piling up sandbags while they wait for the crest to work its way downstream.

But flooding is expected to disappear below Cairo, Ill., where the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers meet, and the river gets deeper and wider.

The 1½ months of flooding in the midwest has caused at least 31 deaths and $10 billion in damage, left 16,000 square miles (41,450 square kilometres) of farmland underwater, and damaged more than 22,000 homes.

On Monday night, a bridge between Keokuk, Iowa, and Hamilton, Ill., was reopened after crews labouring through the weekend used bulldozers and dump trucks to spread gravel on a washed-out access road. Traffic was limited to two lanes instead of four and held to 5 mph (8 kph). It is the only passable bridge over the Mississippi for 200 miles (320 kilometres).

"Ah, I'm going home — finally. No more detours," said truck driver George Smear of Farmington, Ill.

Des Moines' efforts to restore running water to 250,000 people faltered when customers ignored orders and turned on taps while the water mains were being filled to restore pressure. The city now doesn't expect to begin some water service until Wednesday.

"For the greed of a few, it is hurting the masses, and we don't think that is fair," said L.D. McMullen, general manager of the water plant.

City officials said angry residents tattled on 50 businesses and apartments that turned on water. Water crews were sent to lock the offenders' values.

Since the water plant was knocked out by floodwaters on July 11, Des Moines has drawn portable potties like magnets. They stand like sentries outside office buildings, swanky department stores and the gilded state capitol.

"You don't got in unless it's absolutely necessary and you don't stay any longer than absolutely necessary," Charlotte Ayers said.

IAEA wants to negotiate with North Korea soon

VIENNA (AFP) — The U.N. nuclear agency said Tuesday it wanted to resume talks soon with North Korea on checking suspected nuclear weapons sites after Pyongyang said it was willing to negotiate.

North Korea's neigbbours meanwhile reacted cautiously to Pyongyang's announcement in Geneva Monday, after three rounds of talks with U.S. officials, that it would resume negotiations with the agency on opening up the sites to international inspection.

Although the agreement was billed as a breakthrough averting a dangerous showdown, South Korea and Japan expressed concern over whether the reclusive Stalinist government in Pyongyang would eventually give in and actually allow inspections to prove its assertion that it is not building nuclear weapons.

"We welcome the decision by North Korea to return to the negotiating table," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spokesman Hans Mayer said here in Vienna.

"The important thing now is to allow our inspectors to return to North Korea to meet obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)" which North Korea has signed, he added. He said the agency wanted to resume talks as soon as possible.

In Seoul, a Foreign Ministry spokesman praised the North Korean move as marking "important progress towards a solution of the North Korean nuclear problem."

But be warned that Seoul would "be closely watching whether North Korea takes speedy concrete measures for complete and sincere implementation of its international obligations" under the NPT's separate safeguards accord, which requires inspections, and under an inter-Korean nuclear ban accord.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry statement released in Tokyo praised Washington's role in winning the promise from Pyongyang after the talks in Geneva.

"Japan again calls on North Korea to solve as soon as possible the problem of its nuclear weapons development," the statement said, demanding Pyongyang retract its decision to withdraw from the NPT.

China said Tuesday it welcomed progress in talks between North Korea and the United States and called for continued efforts to solve the Korean peninsula's nuclear problems.

"The Chinese government welcomes the positive progress," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Peking hoped that both sides would continue to work in a constructive way to "seek a proper resolution to the nuclear question of the Korean peninsula," he added.

The Geneva talks followed a warning by U.S. President Bill Clinton that if the North Koreans developed and used nuclear weapons, the United States would retaliate with overwhelming force and "it would be the end of their country" as they know it.

North Korea and the United States agreed to resume talks in two months' times.

The head of the U.S. delegation at the Geneva talks, Robert Gallucci, said Monday that North Korea had also agreed to let the United States help Pyongyang switch its nuclear power programme to one that is harder to convert for weapons production.

U.K. army declares plans for Hong Kong pullout

HONG KONG (Agencies) - After 150 years of protecting Hong Kong, largely from Chinese illegal immigrants flooding across the border, the British army announced details Tuesday of its final withdrawal, to let the Chinese in.

The Ministry of Defence announced plans for the phased withdrawal of all British troops, to leave just a symbolic rump in the run up to July 1, 1997, when the Chinese flag goes up in Hong Kong.

The British pullout, outlined by Armed Force Minister Jeremy Hanley in London Monday, has long been accepted, but fears remain over the stationing here of the China's People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Ever since tanks rolled into Peking's Tiananmen Square to suppress the 1989 pro-democracy movement, the thought of the PLA being stationed in the heart of thriving capitalist Hong Kong has sent shudders through the community.

Local legislator James To, defence spokesman for the United Democrats, said there was no threat to Hong Kong and therefore no need for Peking to station troops in Central, the main business district.

"Unlike Britain the Chinese could quickly mobilise forces from Shenzhen (across the border) or from the navy.

"If they station troops in Central then it would appear the only reason would be to have the ability to suppress people here," he said.

British commander Major General John Foley said he had no qualms about pulling out of the colony. "I have no personal feeling, what happens after 1997 is purely a matter for the Chinese," he told reporters here.

The current three British battalions, a total of around 7,500 personnel, will be reduced to one in the second half of 1994. The Black Watch regiment will pull out around six months earlier than originally planned and the current two battalions of Gurkhas, the famed fighters from the hill villages of Nepal, will be merged into a single unit.

Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force units will remain in the colony until June 1997, Gen. Foley said.

Meanwhile, China and Britain Tuesday began an eighth round of talks on controversial plans for democratic reform in Hong Kong with both sides saying a recent meeting of foreign ministers portended swifter progress.

The negotiations, scheduled to last three days, are the first since British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd had talks in Peking this month with his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen.

Top Italian businessman found dead in jail

MILAN (R) — Top businessman Gabriele Cagliari, held in jail as a suspect in Italy's corruption scandal, was found dead with a plastic bag over his head Tuesday and a magistrate said he had almost certainly killed himself.

An official prison report said guards had found Mr. Cagliari, the former head of Italian state energy group ENI, slumped in the bathroom of his cell in central Milan's grim San Vittore Prison with the bag covering his head.

Attempts to revive him in the prison infirmary failed and he was declared dead at 10:05 a.m. (0805 GMT), the report said.

It said Mr. Cagliari, who was 67, had shared the cell with three other detainees but had been alone at the time.

"There shouldn't be any doubts that Gabriele Cagliari committed suicide," investigating magistrate Maurizio Grigio said after seeing Mr. Cagliari's corpse.

Mr. Cagliari's death after four months in jail was certain to raise a storm about the treatment of suspects in Italy's corruption scandal, which has implicated well over 1,000 people including former prime ministers and top businessmen.

Mr. Cagliari was chairman of Ente Nazionali Idrocarburi from 1989, Italy's second largest private company, until his arrest this year and had been held in preventive custody since March 9.

Mr. Cagliari had admitted while in jail that ENI had paid around 20 billion lire ($12.6 million) to Italy's ruling Christian Democratic and Socialist parties through a web of overseas subsidiaries.

But he insisted he had inherited the system from his predecessors.

Sihanouk drops Khmer Rouge role

PEKING (R) — Cambodian head of state Prince Norodom Sihanouk, saying his ruined country cannot withstand American threats, has dropped plans to offer Khmer Rouge guerrillas a role in his new government or army.

"So as not to end my days in an insane asylum, I refuse to organise in September 1993 or after a 'round table' with Mr. Khieu Samphan or other Khmer Rouge (leaders)," Prince Sihanouk said in a statement dated Monday but given to Western news agencies Tuesday.

Deputy U.S. Secretary of State Clifton Wharton said in an interview published Monday that the United States would not support or provide aid to Cambodia if the Khmer Rouge were included in any new government.

He delivered that message to Prince Sihanouk on a recent visit to Phnom Penh, the first by a high-level U.S. official since before the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975.

In his statement, Prince Sihanouk referred directly to the U.S. threats.

"At the risk of repeating myself, the United States of America continues to threaten... Cambodia with various hostile measures in case the Khmer Rouge are accepted by me or the Cambodian government as members of that government or advisers, or members of the National Army of Cambodia," Prince Sihanouk said.

"I have always fought against all foreign interference in the internal affairs of my country, but under the real circumstances in Cambodia, which is ruined and which must receive aid and support from the wealthy foreign powers, I cannot fight any more against the United States of America," the prince said.

Khmer Rouge nominal leader Khieu Samphan, who returned to the capital last week after a three-month absence, wants his guerrillas to have positions in the army and to serve as "permanent counsellors", not ministers, in the government.

The Maoist-inspired Khmer Rouge, which led a reign of terror until December 1978 in which at least a million Cambodians died, signed the Paris peace accords in 1991 which led to U.N.-sponsored elections in May.

It then pulled out of the election process with threats of violence and has since signalled its interest in returning to the peace process.

Cambodia's newly installed co-presidents had already ruled out any early ministerial role for the Khmer Rouge guerrillas in a unified government.

Hun Sen, who led the former Vietnam-installed government which ousted the Khmer Rouge, and Royalist Party leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh made it clear last week that the guerrillas were only being offered a role as advisers at present.

Hor Namhong, minister of state in the interim government and a former foreign minister, said Tuesday that the Khmer guerrillas were a cause for concern in and out of Cambodia.

"The Khmer Rouge problem concerns not only Cambodian people but our foreign friends — France, United States and Australia. It's the subject of concern for everyone," he told Reuters.

But he added that giving the Khmer Rouge some role was the "price of peace for national reconciliation."

Meanwhile, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali Monday recommended nearly all 22,000 troops, police and civilians be out of Cambodia by Nov. 15 when the current U.N. operation would shut down.

Clinton caught between 2 sides on gay policy

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton's new policy allowing homosexuals to join the armed forces provided they remain celibate and silent about their sexual orientation drew bitter protests from gay rights groups Monday.

But military leaders and a powerful southern senator voiced their support for Mr. Clinton's "honourable compromise" aimed at settling an issue that dogged the president almost from the day he took office.

Mr. Clinton, falling short of his campaign promise, announced Monday that gays and lesbians can serve in uniform provided they do not reveal their sexual orientation and do not engage in homosexual acts.

The new policy, which Mr. Clinton announced in a speech at the National Defence University in Washington, says sexual orientation is not a ground for exclusion from military service.

But it rules that homosexual conduct on or off military bases, including a mere statement that an individual is homosexual, is a ground for dismissal from the military.

Gay rights groups, who contended the new cautious policy violates his campaign pledge to lift the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces, said they would take the issue to court.

"Ultimately this policy will be overturned by the courts," said Kevin Cathcart, executive director of the Lambda Legal Defence Fund, a gay legal rights group.

"This policy is asking gays and lesbians to take a vow of silence and a perpetual vow of chastity if they want to serve in the military."

The top commanders of the army, navy, air force and marines, who shared the stage with Mr. Clinton Monday, said they agreed with the policy and were confident they could carry it out.

"I think we have come up with a solution that we can all live with and that protects the force, that protects the privacy rights of all those serving in the force and yet moves in the direction of those who wanted to have a liberal policy," said General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff.

The policy takes effect on Oct. 1, a day after Gen. Powell, who was a fervent opponent of Mr. Clinton's plans to allow homosexuals into the armed forces, plans to retire.

Democratic Senator Sam Nunn, the influential chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee who wanted to reinforce restrictions on homosexuals in the military by writing them into law, said his initial reaction to the new policy was positive.

Sen. Nunn said the policy "appears to set forth standards of military conduct that are consistent with traditional military practice."

But Democratic Representative Gerry Studds, a homosexual from Massachusetts, said that while gays "by a small margin" will be better off, the policy "won't leave room for someone to lead a decent life with self-respect and dignity."

Mr. Studds predicted the controversy will now move into the federal courts and said he was "absolutely confident" that the ban will ultimately be erased.

The White House released a memo from Attorney General Janet Reno which said the Justice Department believes any legal effort to overturn the policy will fail.

"Because of the extraordinary deference paid by the courts to military service, we are confident that the new policy ...will be upheld against constitutional challenge," it said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

25 Indonesians drown

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Twenty-five Indonesians drowned Tuesday and a number of others disappeared after they were forced to swim ashore from a boat bringing them for illegal entry into Malaysia, police said. Officers said 46 Indonesians survived, but they could not tell how many were missing because of differing accounts on the number of passengers. Survivors said there were between 80 and 100 people on the boat Bara Damai, which had left Dumai in Indonesia and arrived 300 metres off Malaysia's Morib Beach resort at about 4:30 a.m. (2050 GMT) Tuesday.

Irish nationalists escape bomb attacks

BELFAST (R) — Protestant extremists Tuesday launched bomb attacks on three Irish nationalist politicians, but failed to harm any of their targets. The Ulster Freedom Fighters, an outlawed group fighting to keep Northern Ireland British, admitted responsibility for the three attacks and warned of more if the Irish Republican Army kept up its bombing campaign. A bomb exploded underneath the car of Joe Hendron, the deputy for West Belfast in the British parliament, a few hours after he had parked it in the driveway of his house. The bomb went off Monday night when Mr. Hendron and his wife and children had gone to bed and no-one was hurt. Mr. Hendron told local radio he believed the bomb was probably planted underneath the car before he drove it home. A bomb was defused under the car of Mr. Hendron's party colleague Brian Feeney but a third went off outside the house of councillor Mary Muldoon, police said.

U.S. fraud probe points to congressman

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. prosecutors released documents Monday that suggested a powerful congressman — the House of Representative's top tax writer — may have embezzled and converted U.S. funds to his own use. In the documents released as part of a plea bargain, former House Postmaster Robert Rota spelled out how he arranged for two members of the U.S. Congress to embezzle thousands of dollars in taxpayer money. The congressmen are not named, but the court papers contain detailed records of transactions that match certain entries in public records submitted by powerful congressman Dan Rostenkowski for his own transactions between 1985 and 1991. The court papers said Mr. Rota "aided and abetted Congressman A in wilfully and knowingly embezzling and converting to Congressman A's own use, without authority, funds of the United States..." In all, the documents show that Mr. Rota arranged for "Congressman A" to embezzle $21,300.

Mexico sends home last Chinese refugees

MEXICO CITY (R) — The last of 662 Chinese boat people were flown out of Mexico and the crew members of the three ships transporting them were jailed as a warning to other potential smugglers. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, here on an official visit, said she expected the international body to take up the issue of "illegal alien smuggling" to try to prevent similar problems in the future. "Since this is not an isolated case, I would imagine that at some stage it will enter the U.N. radar screen," she said. Mexico's Interior Ministry said a fourth and final planeload of boat people was sent home Monday morning from Tijuana's international airport and expected to arrive in China Tuesday. The boat people, who were headed for the United States when the U.S. Coast Guard intercepted their three rusty ships on July 7, were cast adrift for over a week as the United States and Mexico bickered over who would take responsibility for them. The Mexican government ended the embarrassing diplomatic standoff when it accepted the ships for what it called "humanitarian reasons" and said it would pay to send their occupants back to China.

Burma, rebels hold peace talks

BANGKOK (AFP) — One of the most powerful anti-Rangoon guerrilla groups said Tuesday it was conducting peace talks with Burma's ruling junta, confirming earlier reports which have sparked concern among other Burmese opposition groups. The Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) said in a letter published by the English-language newspaper, the Nation, that it had "embarked on a process of military ceasefire talks" since the beginning of the year. The KIO, which operates in the Kachin state bordering China was hoping this would eventually "lead to a peaceful and political solution of all Burma's many grave problems," said the writer, Seng-Raw, a KIO spokeswoman. But she said the group had not signed "or made any separate political agreement with the State Law and Order Restoration Council," or SLORC — the official name of Rangoon's ruling junta.

Vietnam court reduces sentence in orgy case

HANOI (R) — A Vietnamese court has ruled that partying does not threaten the state and merits only a year in prison. Ly Hong Tan, a French national of Vietnamese origin also known as Pierre Tan, was jailed for 18 months last February on charges which included "dissemination of depraved culture" following a birthday party described as an orgy in a hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, a newspaper reported Tuesday. Following an appeal, the Supreme Court in the southern city last Friday dropped one of the charges, "abuse of democratic freedom to damage state interests," and reduced Mr. Tan's prison sentence to 12 months, the English-language Vietnam News said. It was the second reduction of sentence by the court this month. On July 9, it lopped five years off a 20-year sentence given to Doan Viet Hoat, convicted last March with associates of plotting to overthrow the government in a case that sparked criticism from Western human rights groups.

Bank manager jailed for lending himself money

MELBOURNE (R) — An Australian bank manager who secured more than Australian dollar 200,000 ($35,000) of loans for a company he part-owned was jailed for a year. The Victorian Country Court was told David Ford, 49, had approved loans to people who did not exist in 1986 but the money went to the ailing computer company Agrapak PTY Ltd. The court heard that Mr. Ford, formerly manager of a branch of the State Bank of Victoria in Melbourne, had effectively "jumped the counter" by investing in the company in 1985. He obtained a personal overdraft for the company and offered his home as security for the loan but further loans were made when the limits of the overdraft were exceeded. Mr. Ford pleaded guilty to five counts of obtaining property by deception.

Worker in China sues tiger for injuries

PEKING (AFP) — A worker, left disabled after he was seriously injured by a Siberian tiger in northeast China's Heilongjiang province, has decided to sue the beast for damages, the China Daily said Monday. According to the English-language newspaper, Lu Tongxiang said he had undergone three operations since March and paid more than 30,000 yuan ($5,100) in hospital bills, which is 10 times the annual salary of a worker in China's capital Peking. Mr. Lu had requested state aid but Heilongjiang provincial authorities said "that not a single word in the wildlife protection law, published in 1988, suggests anyone injured by wild animals should be compensated by the state." The Siberian tiger is an endangered species in China. "The law only says that local governments should take measures to prevent wildlife from inflicting damage to people's life and property," the China Daily said. An attorney in the province has decided to plead Mr. Lu's case.

Sri Lanka bans TV meat ads

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka has banned meat advertising on television to avoid arousing feelings of inferiority among poor people who cannot afford the products, an official spokesman said. "The government decided to ban meat advertisements on television because it feels that poorer classes might feel inferior when they see meat products which they cannot afford to buy," a spokesman from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Information said. The ban, which applies to the two state-run television stations, will be extended to the island's two private stations from next month, he said.

Monk rapes milk maid at Buddhist celebration

PEKING (AFP) — Chinese authorities have arrested a Buddhist monk for raping a milk maid while attending ceremonies marking the anniversary of an ancient temple, a report said. Cai Bingru, 31, a monk from Jiangsu province, travelled to the city of Luoyang in central Henan province June 16 to celebrate the 1,925th anniversary of the White Horse Temple, the July 15 edition of the Henan Legal News said. On the evening of June 19, Cai — also known by his temple name of Xinkong — was taking a stroll near the temple's dairy and began chatting with a milk maid, identified only as Yang, the report said. When the milk maid went to fetch water, Cai grabbed her by the waist and pulled her into a corner where he raped her, it said.

Marseille's Bernes to face his accusers

PARIS (Agencies) — The future of European soccer champions Marseille may hinge on a confrontation in a Valenciennes judge's chambers Wednesday between its general secretary and four players who have accused him of bribery.

Jean-Pierre Bernes has steadfastly denied any role in the payment of a 250,000 franc ($44,000) bribe by Marseille midfielder Jean-Jacques Eydelie to Valenciennes players, although all have named him as the instigator.

If Bernes, who has been in custody for two weeks, admits he was involved in the attempt to fix the league match on May 20, just days before Marseille won the European Cup, FIFA has said the club could be banned immediately from next season's cup.

Sepp Blatter, general secretary of World soccer's governing body, said in a newspaper interview Sunday: "Should it emerge that Jean-Jacques Eydelie was working under the orders of the Marseille General Secretary, Jean-Pierre Bernes, the European champions would be banned internationally, and immediately."

FIFA may at any time step in to deal with an issue if it deems it necessary in the interests of football and can override continental bodies such as the European Football Union (UEFA).

But French Football Federation chief Jean Fournet-Fayard has urged the international soccer authorities not to jump the gun by taking action before the justice investigation is completed.

Investigating Magistrate Bernard Beffy said he hoped Wednesday's confrontation would "clarify everyone's position."

Justice sources said Mr. Beffy did not expect Bernes, right-hand man to controversial Marseille Chairman Bernard Tapie, to change his version of events substantially.

"Bernes is utterly determined despite being very exhausted," a source close to the Marseille official said.

Eydelie has testified that he handed over the money at Bernes' behest and Valenciennes player Christophe Robert has said he accepted it after Bernes spoke to him and his teammates on the telephone.

Jacques Glassmann, the Valenciennes defender who blew the whistle on the affair by telling the match referee at half-time, said he hoped the confrontation would yield the whole truth.

"I hope the truth will finally emerge and that (Bernes) will acknowledge it was he who made the phone call," Glassmann said. "In any case, the justice authorities have other cards in their hand."

Investigators have traced phone calls from Bernes' hotel room to the hotel where the Valenciennes squad was staying.

The envelope containing the cash was of a rare type from a supplier whose only sporting client was Marseille. Police found identical envelopes in a search of the club's headquarters.

They are now studying fingerprints found on the banknotes.

Marseille Vice-President Jean-Louis Levreau said Friday they were confident they would be able to defend their European title next season despite the scandal.

"We're absolutely confident (of remaining in the European Cup)," he said at the first round draw for Europe's three club competitions in Geneva where Marseille were paired with Greek champions AEK Athens.

"I have no worries because I know that none of Marseille's top officials has done anything wrong. Whatever happened came from outside the club," Levreau said.

Mitterrand castigated

Meanwhile, French Justice Minister Pierre Mehaignerie has criticised President Francois Mitterrand for supporting Olympique Marseille owner Bernard Tapie in the football bribes scandal.

The minister, who has started libel proceedings against Mr. Tapie over outspoken criticism of the case investigators, accused Mr. Mitterrand of stoking up feeling over the allegations of bribery made against Marseille.

Mr. Mehaignerie told TF1 television Monday night "there is a balance to be respected and the calming of feelings that I want means that every one must avoid throwing oil on the fire."

He added that Mr. Mitterrand's comments in a Bastille Day television interview "have been interpreted by some people and by some magistrates as putting oil on the fire in this affair."

The head of state threw his support behind Mr. Tapie, who has been increasingly isolated by the accusations, by saying: "As president of OM, I think he has done very well.

"He is intelligent and energetic. I don't know why he should be named in connection with this affair." Mr. Mitterrand added that he admired the Marseille team and that it "owed a lot to Bernard Tapie."

Though not named in the bribery allegations, Mr. Tapie faces libel proceedings for accusing investigators of using "Gestapo" methods. He has also been accused of trying to bribe the former Valenciennes coach Boro Primorac to take the blame for the alleged bribes.

The justice minister has been taking an increasingly tough line on the investigation which has dominated French front pages for the past month. As well as castigating the president and starting a libel suit, Mr. Mehaignerie has also told the Valenciennes prosecutor Eric de Montgolfier to restrict his outspoken declarations in the case.

But the minister said this time he was very "satisfied with the energy that the investigating magistrate and prosecutor were putting into finding the truth in this affair."

Meanwhile, a group of French, National Assembly deputies are planning to press for a parliamentary commission to look into the financing of French sport.

Many French political leaders have expressed concern about the effect of greater professionalism and media attention. One deputy involved in the proposal, quoted by Le Monde newspaper, said "this is leading to catastrophic financial situations which encourage questionable practices."

Indurain's Tour de France procession stops briefly

ANDORRA (R) — The procession towards Miguel Indurain's third successive Tour de France title came to a temporary standstill Tuesday as riders took a break in the Pyrenees.

The Spaniard was able to spend the rest day in the tiny mountain state of Andorra reflecting that he is the unchallenged ruler of a different kingdom — the world of cycling.

So crushing has been his supremacy in the first 17 days of the Tour and so cowed are his rivals by his apparent invincibility that a race which should be a great sporting spectacles is in danger of dying of boredom.

Five times tour winner Bernard Hinault of France, now one of the race's directors, has strongly attacked Indurain's opponents for handing him victory on a plate.

"It's easy to be the boss when other riders let you," he said. "I don't understand their behaviour. All Indurain has to do is ride at his own speed without anyone attacking him."

Monday's first day in the Pyrenees was a case in point, a taxing ride over nine climbs and more than 230 kms which gave ample scope for testing the Spaniard's mettle in the mountains.

Instead, Indurain's Banesto team set the pace with the race leader riding comfortably behind unthreatened by any move from his main challengers.

"He knows how to draw the maximum benefit from the way the others ride." said Hinault. "While nobody forces him to work, he should continue that way.

"Indurain is capable of powerful ascents at his own rhythm. If there is a break, he comes back quietly, always at his own pace. He's not a real climber but he is so strong. He certainly impresses his opponents."

Two stages in the Pyrenees follow Wednesday and Thursday but rivals seem ready to accept Indurain will be able to defend his three-minute lead without any problem and add to it in Saturday's time trial before the race ends in Paris Sunday.

The riders placed second and third, Alvaro Mejia of Colombia and Zenon Jaskula of Poland are both surprised to be where they are and happy to defend their potential places on the podium rather than take the risk of attacking.

The field goes through the Izoard Pass on the 11th stage of the Tour de France

"I don't think Mejia could take time off Indurain and besides he's limited in time trials," Hinault said. "I don't see anyone who could bother Indurain."

But with the top three riders taking a defensive approach, the Tour has become one of the least spectacular in years, a pitiful parade which looks likely to last till Sunday.

The rider who might have troubled the Spaniard is Swiss Tony Rominger, an impressive mountain performer who won the two tough Alpine stages.

Rominger has finished in the same time as Indurain in all of the road race stages but is in a hopeless position almost six minutes down because of bad luck in the time trials.

His Spanish Clas outfit suffered a disaster in the team time trial and were docked a minute because one of their riders received illegal help and Rominger himself got the worst weather conditions in the individual race against the clock when he faced strong winds and a hailstorm.

The Swiss has no thoughts of taking on Indurain. "He's definitely out of reach," he said. "I'm just happy to defend my king of the mountains jersey now."

Indurain, who has emerged as a great, if unchallenged champion, can at least be happy as he heads for a third victory which gives him an exalted place in tour history.

Only Frenchman Louison Bobet and Jacques Anquetil and Belgian Eddy Merckx have won three Tours in a row before and Indurain will become the first man to win both the Tours of Italy and France in two successive years.

"My toughest rival on Monday was the wind," said Indurain. "Now I just have to do well in Wednesday's stage because the race will be decided by then."

The 16th stage is a tough one from Andorra to St. Lary Soulan over 230 kms and five major passes.

Meanwhile, three-time world champion racing driver Alain Prost mounted two wheels Tuesday to tackle one of the toughest Tour de France stages.

The Frenchman, who has made cycling his main leisure sport in place of golf, joined 2,500 part-time riders who took the 189.5 km mountainous route that will be taken by the real Tour Wednesday.

Many watched as Prost and the others tackled the last real mountain stage of the 1993 competition — with one climb of the toughest category and two others that would test even the world's best.

Weather forecasters predicted rain on the slopes which reportedly had concerned Prost's Williams-Renault team. The Formula One World Championship leader is to race in the German Grand Prix at Hockenheim this weekend.

Prost arrived in Pau at the end of the race in 242nd place in 7hr 24min.

"It was very dangerous. The roads were very slippery and I have never covered more than 120 km before. But you have to set yourself challenges."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bubka wins against weak field

BARCELONA (AP) — World record holder Sergei Bubka won the pole vault in Monday's City of Barcelona IAAF Invitational against a weak field and continued to struggle, failing three times to clear 5.81 metres at the Olympic Stadium. Bubka, who has set 34 world records — 18 indoor and 16 outdoor, cleared 5.61 (18-4 ¾ inches) but then was visibly upset after his three misses at 5.81 (19 feet). The 29-year-old Ukrainian began the season well with a 6.00-metre (19-8 ¼) vault in the United States but has been in a slump since then. In a meet in Oslo on July 12, Bubka suffered his third straight defeat when he failed to make a qualifying height. Bubka holds the world outdoor mark at 6.13 metres (20-1 ¼) and the indoor mark at 6.15 metres (20-2). The lackluster meet at the site of the 1992 Olympic Games offered few strong performances. In the night's most-watched race, 1992 Olympic gold medalist Fermin Cacho of Spain ran a quick time of 3 minutes 33.36 seconds at 1,500 metres. In the high jump, world record holder Javier Sotomayor of Cuba won with a jump of 2.30 (7-6 ½ inches). Daniel Plaza, another of Spain's gold medalists in the 1992 Olympics, won the 5,000-metre walk in 20:44.10.

McKoy, Jackson set for showdown

NICE, France (R) — Olympic high hurdles champion Mark McKoy goes head-to-head with his arch-rival and close friend Colin Jackson for the second time this season Wednesday in a high-powered clash at the Nice Grand Prix. The two fastest men this year have each made their mark as they vie for the psychological advantage ahead of next month's World Athletics Championships. Jackson, the European champion and record holder, defeated the Canadian Olympic champion in the Rome Grand Prix last month. McKoy responded a personal best and the fastest time of the season, 13.08 seconds, in Lille this month.

Gullit, Platt cause traffic jams

GENOA, Italy (AFP) — The arrival of Ruud Gullit and David Platt at Sampdoria Tuesday drew 12,000 fans who caused traffic jams around the club's training ground. The Dutchman and the England captain was the star attraction at the Genoa club Bogliasco ground just down the coast. Their presence caused one tailback 12 kilometre long. The cars even delayed the arrival of Gullit, 31, who has joined after six seasons at AC Milan. "I am delighted to be here and I am sure we are going to achieve great things with this team," said the Dutch star. Platt added: "This has a spectacular welcome today and I just want to thank everyone. I am not an out and out attacker but I think I will still score a lot of goals. I must first get used to the atmosphere."

Carl Lewis to meet Linford Christie July 30

LONDON (Agencies) — World 100 metres champion Carl Lewis will race against Olympic gold medallist Linford Christie at an invitation athletics meeting in Gateshead near Newcastle on July 30.

A British newspaper report said each runner would be paid £100,000 ($150,000) each.

The clash will be the first meeting between the pair since the 1991 Tokyo World Championships.

Lewis won the gold medal in Tokyo in a world record 9.86 seconds with Christie fourth in a European record 9.92 seconds.

The 32-year-old American, Olympic champion in 1984 and 1988, did not qualify for last year's Barcelona Olympic sprint events after suffering a viral infection at the U.S. trials and in his absence Christie took the gold medal.

Christie, 33, has been unbeaten in seven 100 metres finals this year.

Lewis has raced four times over 100 metres but has yet to win although his form has been steadily improving. He finished third to Andre Cason in the American trials and defeated world champion Michael Johnson over 200 metres in his last outing at the Lausanne Grand Prix this month.

Plans for a $250,000 meeting between the pair in Tokyo last September fell through as did a proposed meeting in Las Vegas in May.

Lewis accused his rival of behaving "like an artful dodger" but Christie said he had never avoided anybody and British promotions officer Andy Norman said Lewis had turned down four invitations to run in Britain.

Christie has won only one of the 12 races between the two men, in Monte Carlo four years ago.

Meanwhile, Sally Gunnell, Olympic champion in the 400 metre hurdles, is angry at the disparity in pay between men and women athletes.

Gunnell reacted to a report by a women's athletics committee that says she receives $15,000 per meeting in Britain while men's Olympic 100-metre champion Christie gets $45,000.

"If the figures are correct then the situation is quite wrong and unfair when the both of us are current Olympic champions," Gunnell told the Evening Standard newspaper in Nice, France, where she is due to compete Wednesday.

"As I understand it the margin between men and women tennis players at Wimbledon has been narrowed down to about 10 per cent," Gunnell said. "Yet in athletics the two top champions of our country seem to have a gender difference of 33 per cent.

"If this is true, then I'm angry on behalf of all other top British women athletes. I'm concerned about establishing a reasonable equality of paying British women athletes all the way down the scale provided we keep on improving our present standards."

The figures were compiled by the British Athletic Federation's Women's Working Committee. The panel is seeking to redress the financial imbalance.

African Nations' Cup reaches climax

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — The qualifying phase of the 1994 African Nations' Cup reaches a thrilling climax this weekend with 20 countries seeking nine places at the finals.

Hosts Tunisia, holders Ivory Coast and Group 3 winners Sierra Leone have already booked berths at the biennial showpiece of African football.

But twice champions Cameroon will miss the finals for the first time since 1980 if Group 1 leaders Gabon win in Benin, who have suffered five consecutive defeats.

Cameroon, held goalless in three qualifiers, can escape the axe only if they conquer Niger by a three-goal margin at home, and Belgian-coached Gabon drop a point.

Nigeria, runners-up in three of the previous five tournaments, should defeat Ethiopia at home and clinch first place in Group 2, which includes Uganda and Sudan.

Senegal visit Algeria needing a two-goal victory to pip the North Africans on goal difference for second spot behind Sierra Leone in one of two groups where the runners-up also qualify.

However, after winning 2-1 in Dakar, 1990 African champions Algeria should complete a double over the Senegalese, who reached the quarterfinals last year when acting as hosts.

Zaire, coasting to success in Group 4 until a shock home defeat by Kenya, entertain lowly Lesotho while the East Africans, level on points but trailing on goal difference, host Mozambique.

Lesotho, formidable at home but feeble away, seem less likely to cause an upset than the Mozambicans, who could reach Tunisia if they achieve a rare away victory and Zaire falter again.

Zambia and Zimbabwe have dominated Group 5, where South Africa and Mauritius offered minimal resistance, and their clash in Harare will determine who represents southern Africa.

The Zambians have beaten Morocco in the World Cup and South Africa in the Nations' Cup since rebuilding their squad after 18 players perished in an April air crash.

Zimbabwe, attempting to reach the finals for the first time, have lost only once in 13 matches since strict German coach Reinhard Fabisch took charge one year ago.

A win or a score draw in Congo would put Guinea into the finals while a goalless draw would result in a play-off against Burundi.

If Congo win, Burundi will qualify for the first time.

U.S. Open prize money exceeds $9m

WHITE PLAINS, New York (R) — Prize money at the U.S. Open Tennis Championships will break the $9 million mark this year, the U.S. Tennis Association announced. Officials said the U.S. Open, which begins on Aug. 30, will offer a Grand Slam record of $9,022,000 in prize money — an increase of nearly $500,000 from last year. "The U.S. Open is offering record prize money for men and women at the 1993 tournament, which for the last 25 years has been the premier showcase of the world's greatest players," J. Howard "Bumpy" Frazer, president of the USTA and chairman of the U.S. Open, said in a statement. The men's and women's singles champions will each collect $535,000, an increase of $35,000 from last year. The doubles winners will split $200,000, an increase of $16,000. Prize money at the U.S. Open has more than doubled since 1988 when the total purse was $4,371,500.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠Q96 ♡A74 ◇KQJ10963 ♣Void
The bidding has proceeded:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	2 ♣	?	

What action do you take?

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠K64 ♡Q976 ◇Q6 ♣AQ84
The bidding has proceeded:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Dbl
?			

What action do you take?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠Q976 ♡K64 ◇Q6 ♣AQ84
The bidding has proceeded:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Dbl
?			

What action do you take?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠5 ♡A7853 ◇QJ932 ♣72
The bidding has proceeded:

North	East	South	West
2 ♡*	Dbl	?	

(*—weak)
What action do you take?

Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠87 ♡AJ94 ◇A109543 ♣8
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump and East passes. What do you bid now?

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A873 ♡K ◇10765 ♣J854
The bidding has proceeded:

North	East	South	West
1 ♡	Dbl	?	

What action do you take?

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Miyazawa signals change of heart

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa gave his strongest indication yet Tuesday that he would resign, as pressure for him to step down mounted within his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Mr. Miyazawa, who has been criticised by some top LDP officials for stubbornly banging on to his job, hinted strongly at an afternoon party meeting that he had no intention of clinging to power.

"I have already made up my mind," Mr. Miyazawa said without elaborating.

Responding specifically to remarks made by outspoken LDP maverick and former Transport Minister Shintaro Ishihara that he should step down, Mr. Miyazawa said: "It is natural for me to respect the opinion of party members."

"I am not obsessed. Please don't misunderstand me," he added.

The meeting, attended by the LDP's executive leadership, had been called to discuss rebuilding the party following its defeat in Sunday's election, when the LDP lost its overall parliamentary majority after 30 years of uninterrupted one-party rule.

"The outcome is clear," former Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe said later when asked if the prime minister would resign.

Press reports speculated that Mr. Miyazawa would announce his resignation at a full meeting Thursday of LDP upper and lower house members that is scheduled to discuss the party's candidate for the premiership.

According to the Japanese constitution, an extraordinary parliamentary session to elect the prime minister must be held within 30 days of a general election.

In a highly unusual confrontation, an outspoken minister demanded that Mr. Miyazawa resign, then resigned himself when the demand was rejected.

The sudden decision of Posts and Telecommunications Minister Junichiro Koizumi further weakened Mr. Miyazawa's fragile grip on power.

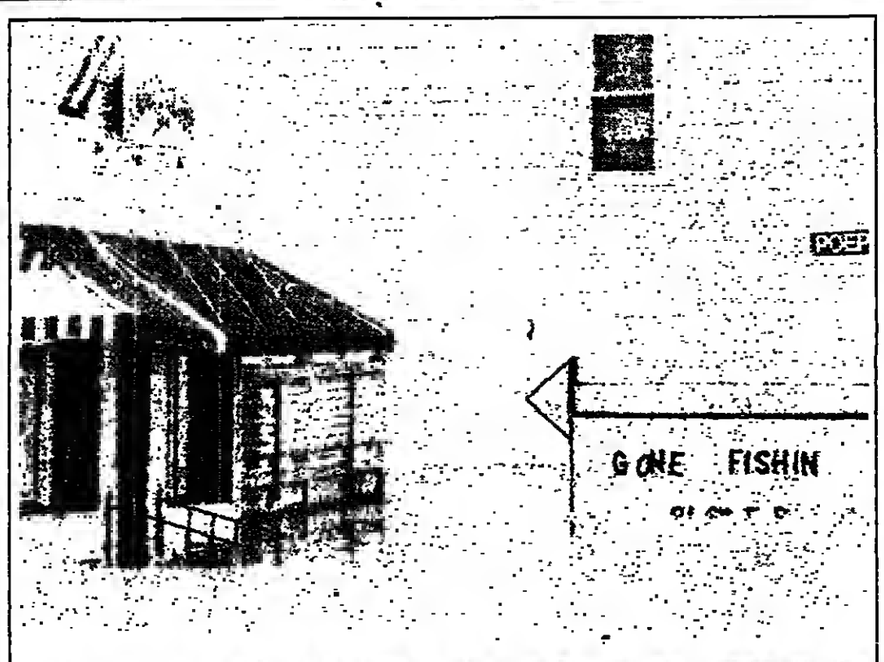
Mr. Miyazawa, considered a lame duck since losing a no-confidence vote in June, surprised party members Monday when he refused to resign, saying he would make his own decision after considering party views.

The trouble LDP power brokers are having in persuading Mr. Miyazawa to step aside is nothing compared with the struggle they face in replacing him, and keeping the party together, once he quits.

Getting rid of Mr. Miyazawa will probably be the easy part for a party sharply divided about its own future.

As they search for a new leader, the Liberal Democrats are struggling to find a candidate who would satisfy both the reformers and the old-style power brokers who have been blocking anti-corruption reforms for years.

Former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu or Justice Minister Masharu Gotoda, both known as proponents of political reform, are popular choices among voters. But both have weak support within the party.



CAUGHT IN FLOODS: A sign placed by the owner outside a restaurant in south St. Louis, Missouri, is submerged by flood waters near the River Des Peres. The waters crested at more than 13 metres around the area (AFP photo)

Hogg urges Palestinians to seek quick progress

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — British Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg visited one of the toughest Palestinian refugee camps on the occupied Gaza Strip Tuesday after stressing the need for quick progress at the Middle East peace talks.

"The message I give to the Palestinian representatives is the need to make very early progress in the negotiations," Mr. Hogg told journalists after meeting Haidar Abdul Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation at the bilateral talks.

"We are strongly supportive of the American efforts," Mr. Hogg said.

According to Dr. Abdul Shafi, the minister brought no new ideas. "Britain can only encourage the two sides to make peace and not interfere in the process and let the Americans get on with it," Dr. Abdul Shafi said.

Mr. Hogg, who came over the King Hussein Bridge from Jordan (see page 3) to visit the occupied territories and Israel, drove straight to Gaza City to meet Palestinian leaders.

The minister, who first visited the occupied territories in 1991, wanted "to see current conditions at first hand," a British spokesman said.

At Gaza's Ahli Arab hospital Mr. Hogg met six-year-old Rasbid Al Mughrabi, who was shot in the abdomen by Israeli soldiers July 17 near his Khan Yunis home.

Escorted by officials from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees, Mr. Hogg saw 22 Palestinian homes in Gaza City destroyed by Israeli rocket fire in April and met one of the families still living in a tent.

"He was quite affected by it," UNRWA spokesman Ron Wilkinson told AFP. "He couldn't quite believe it."

The couple's 20-month old baby was shot dead by Israeli troops in Jabalia refugee camp a week after they lost their house.

Mr. Hogg went on to Jabalia refugee camp on the edge of Gaza City and toured a UNRWA clinic in the camp.

He is due to meet West Bank Palestinian figures in East Jerusalem Wednesday and have talks on the peace process with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

The minister leaves for London Thursday.

Earlier, Mr. Hogg urged agreement on a U.S. draft proposal to push stalled negotiations forward.

"The opportunity for progress is fairly limited in time," Mr. Hogg said before meeting Dr. Abdul Shafi and other Palestinian leaders in Gaza. "The Palestinians must press forward."

Hamas members back on streets in force

By Sakher Abu Al Oun
Agence France Presse

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip — Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas activists are back on the streets of the occupied Gaza Strip in strength, six months after Israel expelled 400 activists disrupting Hamas activities.

The Dec. 17 expulsions followed by an army crackdown sent the movement underground, but recent weeks have witnessed new demonstrations of Hamas force.

When on July 9 Hamas called a strike to mark the 67th month of the intifada, groups of activists enforced the stoppage with greater zeal than characterised such days even before the expulsions, Palestinian witnesses said.

They slashed car tyres, spread nails on the road, threatened shopkeepers and prevented journalists and some doctors from moving around, ensuring total closure.

Militants also ordered people off the beach near Shatti refugee camp on the edge of Gaza and set shelters ablaze.

Scuffles erupted on the seashore between Hamas men and picnickers until soldiers moved in. The army clamped a brief curfew on the beach area.

On Saturday, seven months since the mass expulsions, Hamas again flexed its muscles and enforced a strike to mark the anniversary, putting an end to a gradual leavening of the monthly action.

One Hamas member, who asked not to be named, told AFP: "There is no doubt the expulsion of 415 people to Lebanon froze Hamas street activities for a while."

The expulsions did not however, stop bloody attacks by the clandestine armed wing of Hamas, known as Izzedine Al Kassam.

The two main spokesman for Hamas in the Gaza Strip were among the expellees and journalists have found those who remained reluctant to talk and be identified in the press.

"But Hamas overcame that and formed new structures and reorganised," he said. "After the deportations people did break Hamas strikes, but now we will enforce the calls as before."

On July 1, three Hamas men tried to hijack an Israeli bus, but the operation went wrong. Two Jewish died as did two attackers while the third was seriously wounded.

But the spectacular bid drew world attention.

"There is no doubt that the Jerusalem bus operation gave the organisation a big lift," the Hamas man said.

The reemergence of Hamas on the streets is also underlined in graffiti on the walls of Gaza City.

"Hamas will punish anyone who breaks strikes," reads a warning daubed outside Shifa hospital and on Al Wehda street in the well-off Rimal neighbourhood.

"Anyone who tries to stop us punishing strike-breakers will also be punished," the graffiti adds.

Sudanese rebels announce offensive

NAIROBI (R) — The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said Tuesday it had launched a general military offensive in southern Sudan after attacks by government forces reinforced by SPLA splinter groups.

It said its forces were engaged in "major battles" with government troops in parts of the south, forcing aid agencies to halt aid operations for starving civilians in several areas.

An SPLA statement issued in Nairobi said Sudan air force Antonov bombers and MiG warplanes had raided rebel forces in what it described as coordinated attacks between Juba and Nimule — on the Uganda border — and in Kongor county.

These attacks breached a ceasefire agreed between the two sides to enable negotiations to take place on a settlement of the conflict in southern Sudan, the SPLA said.

In Khartoum, a senior Foreign Ministry official briefing reporters Tuesday, said fighting in the south was between Colonel John Garang's mainstream SPLA and the so-called Torit faction led by his ex-lieutenants Riak Machar and Lam Akor.

First Under-Secretary Omar Yousef Barido said this was damaging the peace process, adding that only the government was now respecting the ceasefire in the war.

Mr. Barido called on international aid agencies that suspended operations because of the latest fighting to redirect relief supplies to areas under government control.

The government scored big successes against the rebels last year, fighting has since been bogged down in a situation which military analysts say neither side looks likely to win.

The rebel statement said three infantry brigades launched attacks on the SPLA about 30 kilometres south of Juba on Friday. Three weeks earlier the same brigades had attacked SPLA positions around Juba, capital of southern Sudan.

The SPLA said it inflicted heavy casualties, destroying two tanks and killing more than 200 men, before repulsing the government force. It gave no details of SPLA casualties.

Relief workers in Nairobi also reported fighting over the weekend around Juba, which is held by the government but has been encircled by guerrillas for many years.

For more than 10 years, the SPLA has been fighting what it sees as domination of the Christian or animist blacks in the south by the Arabised and Islamic government in the north.

Fighting was continuing in the Kongor area, where foreign aid workers had been withdrawn for their safety, the SPLA said.

SPLA leader Garang was quoted as congratulating his field commander, Oyai Deng Ajak, and his men on their work. He said some of the fighters who had split from the mainstream SPLA had joined the government forces, and appealed to them to "turn their guns" on the government troops.

The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) earlier announced that foreign relief agencies had pulled out of Kongor and Lapon following the latest outbreak of fighting.

The aid agencies Concern and Goal abandoned the town of Kongor Sunday after what the WFP said was an attack by splinter breakaway SPLA groups.

Clinton names Freeh to succeed Sessions

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton Tuesday nominated federal Judge Louis Freeh to head the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Mr. Clinton called the former FBI agent "a law enforcement legend" and "an investigative genius."

The nomination came one day after Mr. Clinton fired former Judge William Sessions who had faced questions of ethics about his use of FBI benefits.

Mr. Freeh is 43-year-old U.S. district judge from Manhattan who has spent nearly his entire career in government service.

Mr. Clinton made the announcement at a Rose Garden ceremony attended by family and friends of Mr. Freeh.

"He is experienced, energetic and independent. He will be both good and tough — good for the FBI and tough on criminals," Mr. Clinton said in announcing his nomination.

Although it took Mr. Clinton months to fire Mr. Sessions, who steadfastly resisted administration entreaties that he retire, the president was quick in naming a successor.

Mr. Clinton interviewed Mr. Freeh at the White House last Friday and aides said he had been the only candidate for the FBI post under active consideration.

Mr. Freeh was appointed to the bench by President George Bush in 1991 after five years as an FBI agent and a decade as a federal prosecutor. As a prosecutor, he specialised in investigating organised crime.

White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers said earlier Tuesday that swift confirmation was hoped for, in part because "he went through the process only two years ago" to become a federal judge.

Mr. Freeh said, "I pledge my total commitment to an FBI whose only beacon is the rule of law, whose sole task is protecting all our people from crime and violence."

"Our country must be made safe again, in cities, towns, villages and the countryside," he said.

Mr. Clinton's firing of Mr. Sessions Monday ended a long confrontation between the administration and the embattled FBI chief, who refused to step down. In dismissing sessions, Mr. Clinton cited "serious questions" about Sessions' conduct and leadership. And Attorney General Janet Reno cited "deficiency in judgment" on the part of the director.

Mr. Sessions was accused of ethical lapses by the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) in January. The OPR accused him of disregarding rules restricting his use of FBI cars, planes and other benefits.

Mr. Sessions insisted Monday that he had done nothing wrong and suggested his dismissal had been politically motivated.

Kuwaiti policeman denies murder and rape charges

KUWAIT (AP) — A policeman accused of rape and murder in a widely publicised attack on a Lebanese family's home after the liberation of Kuwait two years ago said Tuesday he was innocent.

The accused, Jaber Al Ameeri, also complained about his prison conditions, saying he had been ill for several days but his jailers would not refer him to a physician.

The 33-year-old prisoner was answering written questions handed to him by a visitor who spent 45 minutes with him at Kuwait's central prison.

The visitor, who relayed the answers back to the Associated Press, asked that he not be identified.

Naimat Farhat, 33, identified Mr. Ameeri in court Saturday as the attacker who allegedly raped her, killed her father, Ismail, and brother, Osama, then shot her in the head and left her for dead.

Ms. Farhat, whose right arm and leg were paralysed because of the head wound, left Kuwait early Tuesday for London on her back to Santa Cruz, California, where she has been living with another brother, Naim Farhat, since shortly after the attack.

She would not say if she planned to return to Kuwait when the court reconvenes to hear the case Sept. 1.

The March 2, 1991, attack on the Farhats' home in the Salwa district of Kuwait City has drawn international attention as a measure of how willing Kuwait is to prosecute and punish its own people for revenge attacks following the 1991 Gulf war.

The Washington-based Middle East Watch says it has received reports of 40 summary executions, 102 disappearances and hundreds of cases of torture by Kuwaiti security forces in the days after the emirate's liberation from Iraqi occupation Feb. 26, 1991.

Most of the victims were Arabs, mainly Palestinians accused of collaborating with Iraqi occupiers.

Mr. Ameeri was arrested in April after Ms. Farhat selected his photograph from among several sent to her in the United States by Kuwait's interior ministry.

Ms. Farhat flew to Kuwait last Wednesday to meet Mr. Al Ameeri face-to-face in court. She told the judges Mr. Al Ameeri definitely was the man who attacked the family.

"I swear to God that I don't know her and hadn't seen her before," the court hearing, Mr. Al Ameeri said in the answers relayed to the AP.

"May God forgive her," he said. "God also will help me."

Mr. Ameeri has difficulty moving his right arm and walks with a limp because of injuries he sustained in a car accident. He says the accident occurred a day before the alleged attack on the Farhats' home, but investigation into that claim has not been completed.

Mr. Ameeri said he was "handicapped" in the accident and could not have posibly attacked the family.

His health has further deteriorated in prison, he said. "Fifty-five per cent of my body doesn't function. I haven't been able to use a toilet for six days and I haven't been referred to a physician despite a court order," he said in response to a question about the prison conditions.

Prison warden Brigadier General Khalil Saidan, acting on a request from Mr. Ameeri's lawyer, Khaled Al Ngaimshi, had ordered that the prisoner be referred to a medical committee to determine if he required hospitalisation. But the order has not been carried out.

Mr. Ameeri said a representative of Ms. Farhat had "asked for financial compensation in return for dropping the charges.

"I don't want to pay money. I'm innocent and I have confidence in the court," the visitor quoted him as saying.

Ms. Farhat's brother, Naim, said last week that he would seek compensation for the murder of his father and brother, and reparations for his sister who "will suffer until the last day of her life."

Assad releases jailed rivals after 23 years

NICOSIA (AP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has freed five of the world's longest-held political prisoners, old rivals who have been imprisoned for more than two decades, diplomatic sources reported Tuesday.

The release last month from the notorious Al Mezze military prison in Damascus underscored a gradual change in the political climate in Syria. Mr. Assad is slowly opening up his country after 23 years of iron rule.

The United States and its allies have been pressing the Syrian leader to ease restrictions, curb human rights abuses, break with extremist groups and narcotics smuggling in return for Western economic aid.

In Damascus, Syrian officials confirmed that some prisoners had been freed recently, but gave no details.

However, the Western sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, identified the released men as:

— Abdul Hamid Mukdad, a former member of the ruling Baath Party's national command.

— Mohammad Said Taleb, former agricultural minister and president of the Syrian-Soviet Friendship Society.

— Haditha Murad, former commander of the Baath's Popular Army militia and member of the regional command.

— Marwan Habash, a senior Baathist and former industry minister.

— Kamel Hussein, former ambassador to France and member of the regional command.

Mr. Taleb was arrested in early 1971. The others were thrown in prison soon after Mr. Assad seized power in a bloodless coup on Nov. 16, 1970.

All were considered loyal to Major General Salah Jadid, the Syrian strongman from 1966 to 1970, who was also imprisoned following the coup.

Gen. Jadid, a former chief of staff, assistant secretary-general of the Baath's regional command and Mr. Assad's main rival at the time, remains in Al Mezze along with a half-dozen other leading Baathists whom Mr. Assad imprisoned after taking power.

The Syrian regime has imprisoned thousands of people without trial under emergency laws, in force since March 8, 1963, in systematic crackdowns to suppress all political dissent.

Human Rights groups say hundreds, possibly more, died in prison, often from torture, or were summarily executed.

But in recent months, Mr. Assad has released at least four other prominent dissidents.

They are Nureddin Al Atassi, the Syrian president he overthrew in 1970; Mjali Nasraween, a Jordanian and former national command member held since June 1971; Hakem Al Fayez, another Jordanian and former member of the national command who was abducted in Lebanon in 1971; and Hassan Al Khatib, a Palestinian who was a member of the regional command in Jordan and the national command in Syria. He was arrested in June 1971.

Mr. Atassi, who was in poor health when he was freed Aug. 28, 1992, died of throat cancer in Paris last December.

The regime has given no indication that it plans to free Jadid and six other senior officials arrested with him in 1970 who are still behind bars.

However, the release of the nine long-term prisoners has raised expectations that Gen. Jadid and the other six may soon be freed as well.

In late 1991, Mr. Assad unexpectedly pardoned some 3,500 prisoners held on security grounds, including members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, communists and Palestinians.

Many of them had been held in prisons under harsh conditions for more than a decade.

Nearly 1,000 more were freed last year, including those charged with "activities against the security of the state."

Middle East Watch, a New York-based human rights group, reported last November that an estimated 4,400 political prisoners remained behind bars in Syria.

These include a who's who of Syria's professional elite, doctors, lawyers, engineers, academics and writers who agitated for democratic freedoms.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Afghanistan seeks friendly ties with India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Afghanistan regrets India's backing for the Soviet-backed communist regime in Kabul but now wants friendly ties with New Delhi, Afghan Foreign Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala said here Tuesday. "Let bygones be bygones," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted him as saying in an interview during the first high-level contact between the two countries since the communists' ouster. Mr. Amin Arsala said Kabul regretted India's sustained support to former President Najibullah and the Soviet occupation of his country, but invited India to join other countries in the reconstruction of war-ravaged Afghanistan. The Indian government announced Monday that it had decided to reopen its embassy in Kabul, where most countries closed their diplomatic missions earlier this year during intense fighting between rival groups. India was the strongest non-communist supporter of Mr. Najibullah until his fall last year. Though he is trapped in a United Nations compound in Kabul, his family lives in India.

French man's extradition appeal rejected

NICOSIA (AP) — Charles Altieri, a convicted French murderer and drug trafficker fighting extradition to France, lost his final appeal Tuesday to the full Cyprus supreme court. The unanimous decision by the five judges ended a five-month legal battle by Mr. Altieri, 37, to avoid extradition. He faces a life sentence in France for the murder of Judge Pierre Michel in Marseille in 1981. It was expected he would be flown home as soon as the French government's extradition request is signed by Public Order Minister Alecos Evangelou. Supreme Court Judge Demetrakis Demetriades announced the verdict minutes after Mr. Altieri's lawyer, Kyriacos Kourtis, concluded a three-hour argument against his client extradition. "We reject the appeal. A full judgment will be issued in due course," Mr. Demetriades said.

Iran cleric urges more tolerance on Islamic codes

TEHRAN (AFP) — A leading Iranian cleric has called for authorities to show more tolerance towards women who violate Islamic codes on dressing in public, the daily Salam newspaper reported here Tuesday. Hojatoleslam Javed Elahi, a leading figure in a public campaign to crack down on people breaching Islamic codes of behaviour, said most offenders just merited a "talking to" by security forces. Currently women are liable to be flogged, or fined, if police find their hair showing through the cloaks and veils they are required to wear in public. Excessive amounts of make-up warrant the same punishment, and hundreds of women have been arrested in a crackdown since June, instigated by religious leaders. Mr. Hojatoleslam Elahi said most women who violated Islamic codes were unaware they were committing any offence. Only women who were "aggressive" towards the security forces should be arrested, he said.

Germany to free jailed Lebanese kidnapper

KARLSRUHE (R) — A Lebanese jailed in Germany for kidnapping will be freed and deported to his native Lebanon on Aug. 8 after serving half of a 13-year term, federal prosecutors said Tuesday. Abbas Hamadi was jailed in 1986 for his role in kidnapping two German businessmen, later freed, in a failed attempt to force the release of a brother held in Germany for murder and hijacking. Justice officials in Saar state, where both men are held, have said there were no plans to release Mr. Hamadi's brother Mohammad Ali, jailed for life in 1989 for the 1985 hijacking of a U.S. airliner to Beirut in which a U.S. navy diver was killed.

Iran asks Greece to extradite Shah's widow

ATHENS (AFP) — Iran has asked Greece to extradite the visiting widow of the Shah of Iran, a foreign ministry source said Tuesday. Greece has yet to respond to the request, which was filed last Tuesday, the source said. As the widow, Farah Diba, is due to leave Greece Wednesday, there probably will not be time to approve the petition, the source added.

COLUMN

U.K. MP arrested, questioned about police assault

LONDON (AFP) — An MP from the opposition Labour Party was arrested after a disturbance near the House of Commons late Monday and questioned about an alleged assault on a police officer, parliamentary sources said. Labour's defence spokesman George Foulkes, 51, and MP since 1983 — who is also a Justice of the Peace — was taken to Charing Cross police station close to Westminster, but later released without charge. The sources said there was a scuffle outside Chancellor's Gate at the House of Lords end of Westminster, but could give no further details. A Scotland Yard spokeswoman confirmed that a 51-year-old man had been in custody at Charing Cross police station. "He was arrested at 9.20 p.m. at Millbank for assault on a police officer and being drunk and disorderly." The man was later released without charge on police bail, pending further inquiries, she said, adding that a police officer had been treated for facial bruising, but had not needed hospital treatment.

China denies rumours about Deng's health

PEKING (R) — China, fighting a new barrage of rumours about the health of its elderly senior leader Deng Xiaoping, denied Tuesday that there was anything wrong with the patriarch. "Comrade Deng Xiaoping's health is in good condition," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said by telephone in answer to a reporter's question. Rumours about the health of Mr. Deng, who turns 89 next month, periodically sweep the capital. The current round of whispered reports began last week, and spread to stock market players in Hong Kong. Mr. Deng, the architect of China's economic reforms, has no official position any more but is still the country's most influential figure.

Australian thieves take even the kitchen sink

HOBART, Australia (R) — Thieves in the sleepy island of Tasmania have made off with just about everything — including the kitchen sink. Police are investigating the theft Sunday of 23 toilets, 22 hot water systems, six shower bases, six coils of copper wire and 30 kitchen sinks from a plumbing supply store. Police admitted Tuesday they had no leads and are appealing for people to be wary of anyone peddling cheap homeware items. "People are used to being offered videos or TVs down at their local pub, but it's not every day someone offers you a sink," detective Sergeant Mike Young told Australian Associated Press. Police estimate the gang took at least an hour to cart away the goods and may have made more than one trip. They hope their appeal will flush out the thieves.

Tonnes of lead to keep Tower of Pisa on its feet

ROME (AFP) — Technicians have temporarily placed 12 tonnes of lead inside the Leaning Tower of Pisa over the past five days in a bid to prevent the Middle Ages monument from falling over altogether, experts said. In an experimental operation expected to take six months, a committee of 13 international experts plans to anchor up to 100 tonnes of lead inside the structure which, because of an underlying water table, has listed ever since its construction in the 12th century. The tower, one of Italy's major tourist attractions, was closed in 1990. Last year technicians attached steel cables to the 15,000-tonne tower in a bid to prevent its collapse. Officials in charge of the work said they hoped the tower would reopen to the public in two years at most, although experts acknowledge they are not sure that the lead treatment can prevent the 800-year-old lean from getting worse.

$300,000 Seoul peace prize scrapped

SEOUL (AP) — South Korea has decided to scrap a controversial $300,000 prize established to commemorate the host of the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, officials said Tuesday. The Sports Ministry said its decision to scrap the biennial Seoul Peace Prize was reported Monday to President Kim Young-Sam. The decision was part of Mr. Kim's austerity campaign.